United Nations A/57/PV.19

General Assembly

Fifty-seventh session

Official Records

19th plenary meeting
Friday, 20 September 2002, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Jan Kavan ..... (Czech Republic)

In the absence of the President, Ms. Jarbussynova (Kazakhstan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 9 (*continued*)

General debate

Address by Ms. Sandra Pierantozzi, Vice-President and Minister of Health of the Republic of Palau

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear a statement by Her Excellency Ms. Sandra Pierantozzi, Vice-President and Minister of Health of the Republic of Palau.

Ms. Sandra Pierantozzi, Vice-President and Minister of Health of the Republic of Palau, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming Her Excellency Ms. Sandra Pierantozzi, Vice-President and Minister of Health of the Republic of Palau, and inviting her to address the General Assembly.

Ms. Pierantozzi (Palau): At the outset, I wish to congratulate Mr. Kavan on his successful election to the leadership post of this Assembly and to offer my country's welcome to East Timor and Switzerland following their recent admission into our family of nations.

We gather here slightly more than one year after the appalling, unconscionable events of 11 September 2001. The world is still striving to come to grips with the full implications of the inhumane savagery of the attacks here in New York and in Alexandria, Virginia. Given the great number of areas in which the various Members of this Organization have differing and often competing interests, we can all derive hope and pride from the fact that the solidarity so evident in the General Assembly last year is still largely intact today. Governments around the world continue to cooperate in efforts to identify, locate and shut down terrorist organizations and those who would give comfort and aid to such organizations.

Palau, in spite of the inherent limitations imposed by its size, remoteness, capacity constraints and economic vulnerability, has fully committed itself to working with the community of nations to defeat terrorists and their sympathizers. We have aggressively pursued revisions in our laws which make it easier to gather information on suspicious persons and activities, to share information with other jurisdictions, to block suspect financial transactions, to establish domestic criminal penalties for transnational crimes, to specifically recognize acts of terror as crimes under our domestic legal system, and to streamline our procedures for asset seizure and extradition in order to better cooperate with our comrades in this war on terrorism.

However, the limitations to which I have referred are hampering our efforts to fully implement these

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laws. No matter how much we may wish to support the global war on terrorism, Palau, like many other developing nations, will not be able to participate meaningfully in this vital campaign without the assistance of the developed nations. Therefore, to those leading the combat against terrorism, Palau says: "Please, give us the tools we need to make a substantial contribution to this fight and render practical support for your efforts."

While the great majority of nations remain united in their desire to see terrorism defeated — and that is a cause for hope — there are also grounds for concern. Some nations appear to be wavering in their resolve to take concrete actions to prevent terrorist attacks, while some others seem not to fully appreciate the new dynamic of the post-11 September world. Those who supported or condone the events of 11 September take heart when they hear members of this body speak of waiting for a consensus before acting to remove credible threats to national and international stability. Terrorists and their sympathizers are likewise comforted when they hear leaders continue to talk in the old language of how to react to terrorism, rather than speak of how to prevent and pre-empt the next attack. Nothing pleases the forces of global terror more than hearing members of the world coalition against terrorism speak of measured and agreed-upon responses to the next atrocity.

The bottom line is this: The potential for catastrophic harm is so great that we cannot wait for the next attack. In this regard, Palau fully supports the United States in its resolve to pre-empt further attacks and loss of life. The very laudable ideal of multilateral, consensus-driven action is good, but it cannot justify and will not excuse the loss of human lives and the degradation of human life that will result from giving those who rely on or sponsor terror the opportunity to strike first, either directly or by proxy. Palau therefore calls upon the Members of the United Nations once again to come together in their commitment to forestall future tragedies.

As noted earlier, we can derive some satisfaction from the fact that the goodwill and unity of purpose that prevailed immediately after last year's subhuman attacks in large part continue to exist. However, Palau also notes that the recent World Summit on Sustainable Development revealed a dismal lack of commitment to addressing the development needs of the great majority of nations. The failure of key nations to recommit to the goals of the Rio Earth Summit is equally disappointing. Taken together, those developments demonstrate that such goodwill and solidarity apparently are confined to matters that most concern the developed world.

The lack of progress on sustainable development also strongly suggests that the developed world still sees developing nations such as Palau as mere token members of the international community, rather than as viable partners. The current view the developed nations seem to have of the developing world is unacceptable and can lead only to greater unrest and instability in the future.

It is time for the unity of purpose that characterizes the global war on terror to be brought to bear in an equally global campaign for sustainable development. It is time to take affirmative action to counteract the effects of globalization and correct the technological imbalances that are widening the gap between developed and developing nations. It is time to take concrete action to give developing nations the tools they need to manage and speed up their own development in ways that will lead to the replacement of dependence on foreign aid with dependence on domestic industry. It is time to implement measures to end the marginalization of developing countries in the new global economy. In that regard, Palau welcomes and applauds the Koizumi Initiative as one of the sadly few positive outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and calls upon all developed members of the United Nations to develop similar initiatives.

The position of certain members of this body on fundamental environmental issues also suggests that global solidarity is limited to areas that concern the major Powers of the developed world. United Nations Members that have enjoyed and continue to enjoy the highest standard of living have done so and continue to do so at the expense of the environmental integrity of our planet. Those major emitters are threatening the lives of small island States such as Palau, placing their mere comfort above our very existence. At the same time, they seek our support for their goals and initiatives. That, too, is unacceptable.

Fortunately, most of the developed world, including the governments of the major industrialized economies of Japan and the European Union, has recognized its responsibility and has endorsed the only

viable response to the existing and worsening adverse impact of climate change, the Kyoto Protocol, and the no-regrets philosophy it embodies. It is time for those developed nations which have shirked their responsibilities and shunned the Kyoto Protocol to end their callous disregard for the fate of those nations most vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change, to admit that the Kyoto Protocol remains the only meaningful first step towards comprehensively addressing climate change and to join the great body of nations that have pledged to work together through the Kyoto Protocol and beyond to combat the effects of climate change.

It is time to take the lessons we have learned from the war on terror, lessons regarding the fundamental importance of working together to respond to a common threat, lessons regarding the very real interdependence of all nations and lessons regarding the need for, and ability of, nations to balance genuine global concerns against perceived self-interests and apply them to the threats posed by climate change and sea-level rise.

Throughout my remarks today, I have emphasized Palau's strong support — in some cases, demands — for global action to address the major threats to stability and progress in this new global order. That is because it has become apparent, as never before, that the widest possible participation in responding to those threats must be encouraged, if real and lasting solutions are to be found.

In light of that fact, Palau must once again note the folly of excluding any potential partner from the efforts of the United Nations to meet the challenges we now face and to prepare against the challenges to come. Such exclusion is particularly short-sighted in efforts of the international community that go beyond politics and address fundamental human concerns, such as health and education. For that reason, Palau must again call upon the members of the United Nations to welcome the Republic of China — Taiwan — into this Organization. At the very least, the membership at this body should endorse the participation of the Republic of China, Taiwan, in the World Health Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Development Programme and similar bodies dedicated to improving the human condition. Mere politics should not be allowed to compromise or prevent the development of a truly global effort to alleviate human suffering and better mankind.

In the area of health, I have appeared before this body in the past, where I discussed the ill effects of tobacco use and our responsibility to protect our youth from the threat of tobacco addiction. I appear before the Assembly today to ask again for its complete support for the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, in order to combat tobacco-related illnesses and complications.

Throughout these remarks, I have also repeatedly returned to the idea of security. That is primarily because we feel less secure in the aftermath of the monstrous attacks of 11 September 2001. The very idea of security has taken on new meaning. Our collective understanding of the kind of cooperation and integration that is necessary to provide effective security has changed radically. Yet, one of the foremost bodies for dealing with security, the Security Council, has remained unchanged. That can hardly be right. In this new environment, it is time to re-examine the composition and powers of the Security Council, to consider how it may be made both more accessible and more accountable and to find ways to increase its ability to respond in a prompt, flexible and effective manner to the threats to peace that are sure to arise in the future.

In closing, let me again confirm Palau's dedication to, and determination to take part in, the global efforts to meet the challenges facing us all. Palau will continue to do all it can to support universal responses to threats to peace and stability, especially mid- and long-term threats, such as climate change and sea-level rise and the widening gaps between developed and developing nations. On behalf of the people and Government of the Republic of Palau, I call upon all Members of this great Organization to do likewise.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Vice-President and Minister for Health of the Republic of Palau for the statement she has just made.

Mrs. Sandra Sumang Pierantozzi, Vice-President and Minister for Health of the Republic of Palau, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: I give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Louis Straker, Deputy

Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Trade, Commerce and Consumer Affairs of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Mr. Straker (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): On behalf of the Government and the people of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, I am pleased to offer our most heartfelt congratulations to President Jan Kavan on his assumption of the office of President of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. Let me also express our appreciation and thanks to the outgoing President, Mr. Han Seung-soo, for the excellent manner in which he conducted the affairs of the fifty-sixth session as President.

I should also like to take this opportunity to welcome our newest member — the Swiss Confederation — into the United Nations, and we look forward to the admission of East Timor to the family of nations before the end of this month.

Let me first of all pay my respects to this Organization, the United Nations, and to our Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan. Since the onslaught of the terrorist attacks in September last year, the world has been focused once again on the unique role of the United Nations as never before, as the nations came together to fight the scourge of terrorism. Just last week, President Bush used his address to this forum to invoke the special and unique assistance of the United Nations to deal with the problems related to Iraq. The world breathed a sigh of relief when it heard the welcome decision by Iraq to readmit the United Nations weapons inspectors, without conditions, into Iraq. We hope that this decision will be efficacious in resolving this problem, which could have unforeseen consequences for the whole world. In general, we support the collective judgement of the United Nations rather than any rash unilateral action by any one or two Member States.

We have also witnessed the tangible results of the support of the United Nations for East Timor in its struggle for independence and for Afghanistan in its struggle for liberation, peace and stability.

I say without hesitation or equivocation that today the world needs the United Nations more than ever before.

Holding the attention of all of us at this time are ongoing activities associated with the war on terrorism. We were all engaged in a solemn commemoration of the sickening events of 11 September just last week, on the occasion of the first anniversary of the brutal terrorist attacks on the United States of America. We — the whole world — must commit ourselves to ensuring that such events will never happen again. We applaud the work done by the Counter-Terrorism Committee established by the United Nations to secure compliance with Security Council resolution 1373 (2001).

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has already contributed to this effort by implementing a range of measures to combat terrorism and assist the global effort. We recognize the links between terrorism and international criminal activities such as drug trafficking, money-laundering and organized crime. We pledge to do whatever is in our power to combat these threats.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, like many of the poorer nations of the world, is crippled by external debt. The burden of this debt means that areas of critical importance to our development, such as education, poverty reduction and social development, are deprived of the resources that are desperately needed for the advancement of our people.

The pursuit of sustainable development remains central to the efforts of our people to create a better life for themselves. To this end, my country had great expectations from the International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Monterrey, Mexico, and also from the just-concluded World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa. While these conferences enabled some attention to be focused on the urgency of the development agenda that must be addressed, and some level of consensus was achieved with respect to the action required, we must lament the reluctance of some developed countries to give more meaningful expression to their stated commitments.

Mere recognition and articulation of the problems will not suffice. Actions, not words, are needed to change the situation. This requires the will and the requisite resources to effect the changes required. We therefore call on those members of the international community to give reality to their words by putting in place the necessary arrangements and the financing through which we all can manage the critical problems of sustainable development. Let us remind the international community of its commitment to meeting

the United Nations target of 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product for official development assistance.

My country, like others in the Caribbean and in Africa, is threatened by the scourge of HIV/AIDS. As a matter of fact, my country has the second-highest per capita ratio of HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). We are in danger of losing a whole generation of our young people to this dreaded disease. We lack the resources to procure the necessary treatment and proper care for those affected. We must all work together — developed and developing countries — to eradicate this and other diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis. We must make sure that the Global Fund to fight these diseases has the necessary resources to do its work effectively.

Six years after the completion of the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations and the creation of the World Trade Organization (WTO), my country has had to endure the ravages of the imbalances of economic power in the world. The constraints imposed by our small size and vulnerability must now be evident to all. As we deploy our limited human resources to engage in negotiations at three distinct and separate levels — the WTO, the European Union and the Free Trade Area of the Americas — we urge that due recognition be given to the need for flexibility in trading arrangements for countries such as mine. We would also like to see a realistic assessment of special and differential treatment in the continued architecture of the global trading and economic arrangements. Our ability to survive is effectively compromised if there is no flexibility in these negotiations.

We welcome the New Partnership for Africa's Development. We commend the African countries that came together to create this bold and imaginative new initiative. Africa needs the help of the United Nations and in particular that of the donor countries. But Africa also needs to help itself by committing itself to peace, democracy and good governance, which requires the eradication of corruption in public life. We welcome the efforts being made to end strife and war and to create a climate of stability and peace in Angola, Sierra Leone, the Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

As we view the international scene, we are troubled by the widespread and corrosive nature of corruption in public life in many countries. The effects in the developing countries are more debilitating. Corruption distorts the economies of those countries, since, in effect, resources are taken from the poor and given to the rich. My country, as part of its war against corruption in public life, has recently ratified the Organization of American States (OAS) Convention against Corruption, which requires, among other things, the criminalizing of illicit enrichment by public officials and integrity legislation requiring a declaration of assets by certain public officials. I humbly suggest that the United Nations recognize the pervasiveness of corruption in public life and its consequent damages and take steps to approve and promote a United Nations anti-corruption convention. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has a very special and beneficial relationship with the Republic of China on Taiwan, which we value. It represents a test of friendship, loyalty, reciprocity and shared values in our relationship. The Republic of China on Taiwan, the 17th largest economy in the world, is a country of 23 million people that has made tremendous strides within a few years to become one of the most economically advanced countries in the Far East. It is a country that practices and promotes human rights. It has a Government that is democratically elected by the free and unfettered expression of its citizens.

We strongly support Taiwan's rights to be a Member of this body of nations. We cannot understand how the exclusion of Taiwan, which is a peace-loving, responsible, democratic and progressive country, can sit comfortably on the collective conscience of the Member States of the United Nations. The United Nations has a role to play in relations between Taiwan and the People's Republic of China. The United Nations should play a facilitating role by providing a forum for reconciliation and rapprochement between the two sides. But — and I cannot stress this point too strongly — the United Nations cannot play such a role if it continues to exclude Taiwan. We shall continue to support the legitimate aspirations of the 23 million people of Taiwan, who remain voiceless in this Assembly, to membership in this body and its agencies, in accordance with the United Nations principle of universality.

The Government and people of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines also share friendship with the people and Government of Cuba. We support the worldwide call, as expressed in United Nations resolutions, for ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba

some 42 years ago. Indeed, such a call has been made by the Congress of the United States so as to facilitate the freedom of movement of United States citizens to Cuba.

We uphold the right of peoples to self-determination — a principle very dear to our people and Government. It is highly improper and unacceptable to the vast majority of the nations of the world that one country impose such suffering on another without any justifiable reason. We call on the United States to heed the voices of its citizens, the Congress and the rest of the world and to engage Cuba in a meaningful dialogue for the mutual benefit of both countries.

Over the past year, we have watched with growing concern the escalation of tension and violence in the Middle East. We are sensitive to the fact that efforts against international terrorism have made the lessening of tensions and the resolution of the problems in the Middle East all the more difficult. We support the plan for two States — Israel and Palestine — living as neighbours within secure borders that are recognized by each other and the international community. Once again, we call on both sides to abide by the various Security Council resolutions on the dispute. We support the efforts of the Quartet and call upon them to continue their peace-making efforts with urgency. They have our unqualified backing. In the meantime, we urge restraint and the use of common sense in the search for a full solution to the problem. We remind all sides that the greatest use of power is restraint in the use of that power. We urge the world community to make sure that all resolutions of the United Nations are enforced fairly, even-handedly and with equity on all States in conflict in the area and to avoid the appearance of selective, capricious or arbitrary enforcements where it suits the interests of some States.

In South Asia, we trust that there will be a de-escalation of tensions in the Kashmiri conflict. The risks and the perils would be too great for the whole world if the two major countries involved in that conflict engage in an all-out war, resorting to nuclear weapons.

We place our support behind every effort to revitalize the work of the General Assembly so that its collective energy and wisdom can again be brought to bear with great weight to resolve the gravest tensions impacting the world community. The General Assembly needs to be more dynamic in order to reflect the will of all its Member States. We also support the need for a reform of the Security Council to give cognizance to the world situation as it exists today and not as was the norm after the Second World War. We fully support the call for an increase in the membership of the Security Council and would work for the more meaningful participation of developing countries in the Security Council to reflect the universal nature of the United Nations.

My country is a small island developing State. As such, we are extremely vulnerable to physical and economic shocks. We are pleased with the recognition given to the unique problems of small island developing States in the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and we look forward to real progress in the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action, leading up to the conference in Mauritius in 2004. We continue to face the threat to our region and our oceans by the passage of hazardous nuclear waste through our waters. The world community must understand just how fragile our ecosystems are. We must reduce the risk by ending that practice, and thus we call on the guilty parties to respect the Caribbean Sea as a special zone for economic development within the context of sustainable development.

I have taken this opportunity to focus our efforts towards increasing sensitivity in the international community to the concerns of our small island developing State. Our perspective is informed by our history and our experiences. Many are the challenges that confront us in a world of globalization and trade liberalization. We make our special plea for special consideration, without which we could become totally marginalized. The aspirations of our people are the same as those of other lands. We desire peace, stability, democracy, respect for human lives and economic and social uplifting. We intend to work hard to achieve those goals. Our people have come through slavery, indentureship, colonialism and imperialism, and we have survived. With the support and goodwill of the donor countries, with our hard work and with the help of the Almighty, we intend to succeed.

The Acting President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ilir Meta, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Albania.

Mr. Meta (Albania): Allow me to extend my best wishes to Mr. Kavan on the occasion of his election to the office of President of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, as well as to congratulate his predecessor, Mr. Han Seung-soo, for presiding with competence over the proceedings of the last session. At the same time, I take this opportunity to congratulate the Swiss Confederation and East Timor on their new membership in the United Nations. I would also like to greet the return of the United States of America to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, which we consider an important event that will contribute positively to the future activity of that Organization.

During this year, Albania witnessed many positive developments in the political, institutional and socio-economic areas. The new climate of dialogue that has recently prevailed in Albanian politics is encouraging the reforms aimed at accelerating the country's integration into Euro-Atlantic structures. The political and social stability of the country is being consolidated, thus creating the conditions for positive developments in all fields. The continuous improvements in democratic standards that characterize Albanian society today are a result of the reforms undertaken to strengthen the rule of law and the building of new democratic institutions.

In the process of implementing the commitments of the Millennium Summit Declaration, the Albanian Government is taking the necessary measures to integrate the Millennium Development Goals into its national development goals. The national strategy for economic and social development, drafted recently by the Albanian Government, with the support of the World Bank, has appropriately accommodated development indicators from various fields to the Millennium Development Goals. We have the political will to continue on the long and difficult road of implementing these objectives. We consider this to be an indispensable process for the country's sustainable development. Albania has already presented its report on the implementation status of the Millennium Development Goals.

For these stated purposes, the Albanian Government is undertaking an extensive campaign targeting the State administration, civil society and the whole of Albanian public opinion, with the purpose of making them aware of their role in implementing these objectives. We highly appreciate the cooperation and support of the Secretariat, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the other specialized agencies of the United Nations in implementing these objectives.

The Albanian Government has recently undertaken comprehensive action against the phenomena of illegal trafficking, smuggling, corruption and abuse of power. Being at the crossroads between East and West, Albanian territory has been an attractive venue for local and international criminal activities and has been exploited as a bridge for the trafficking of human beings, drugs, arms and goods. The crises and conflicts that our region has been forced to experience have contributed to that desirability. To combat this, the Albanian Government has made concrete commitments to end human and all other forms of trafficking coming from, and going through, its territory by severely punishing perpetrators to the full extent of the law, as well as by eliminating the causes that create the conditions for such phenomena to take place.

The political stability of the country has also witnessed very positive developments. The recent presidential election, which has been conducted for the first time with the broad consensus of all parliamentary parties, is further contributing to that stability. The overall reforms we are undertaking have had as their point of reference the standards of the most developed Western countries. The ultimate aim is the integration of Albania into the Euro-Atlantic structures. Joining the European Union has been a permanent major objective of my country. The expected commencement this fall of negotiations on the Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Union will be the best form of encouragement for the comprehensive reforms being carried out in Albania. The whole Albanian political spectrum, including the Government and the opposition, is committed to the achievement of this target.

Albania pays special attention to the Atlantic dimension of that integration. Our aspiration for full membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is in line with NATO's strategic interest in strengthening peace and stability in South-Eastern Europe. We believe that the wider the geographic spread of this organization, the more secure international peace and stability will be. We hope that the ongoing fruitful partnership between Albania and NATO will be recognized and encouraged at the Prague summit.

During the last few years, the region of South-Eastern Europe has experienced a new era of positive changes. The new liberal mentality is significantly taking hold in the consciences of the citizens of our societies. We are confident that this part of Europe will soon become part of the European common future. But, unfortunately, the traces of extreme nationalism and xenophobia that continue to exist remind us that we have a long way to go before we are able to escape the past and establish genuine democracy in our region. Albania is strongly convinced of the need to strengthen regional cooperation on the basis of the principles of friendly and good-neighbourly relations, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity and the protection of human rights and liberties.

Albania has made a valuable and internationally recognized contribution towards the strengthening of peace and stability in the region. Strongly convinced that Albania's internal stability is essential to the stability of other neighbourly countries in the region, and after having completed our tasks at home, we have sought to promote throughout the region the philosophy of co-existence and tolerance, instead of that of hatred and inter-ethnic and religious differences. With its vision towards the future, Albania has made serious efforts towards the regional integration of the countries of South-Eastern Europe on the basis of the European Union model. We believe that this model of reconciliation and cooperation, which was designed and implemented after the Second World War, is the model that the Balkans should embrace and implement with courage while leaving their bloody inter-ethnic conflicts behind.

In that context of cooperation and integration, the free movement of people, goods and capital throughout our region should become a tangible reality for our countries and their citizens. We have to be aware that what we have in common today, and what we will have in common in the future, is more important than the bitter heritage of past differences. This is the philosophy of building on common values for a common future.

As stated two days ago in Kosovo by the External Relations Commissioner of the European Union, Chris Patten, Kosovo has undergone important changes that could not have been imagined three years ago. The building of self-governing democratic institutions in Kosovo was a tremendous achievement by the people of Kosovo and the international organizations led by the United Nations. The normal functioning of those institutions, with the participation and representation of all its citizens, will create the necessary conditions for the further normalization of political, economic and social life in Kosovo. It is our conviction that the local election to be held this October will be conducted in full compliance with international standards and will contribute further to the consolidation of institutions and the democratization and Europianization of Kosovo.

The Albanian Government hails the cooperation between the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo and Kosovo's elected institutions. We are convinced that those relations will be further strengthened in the future to the benefit of all the citizens of Kosovo.

Albania supports Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), as well as the efforts and commitment of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Kosovo, Mr. Michael Steiner.

Albania views relations with Kosovo in the broader perspective of regional stability, cooperation and integration. Albania encourages and supports a stable and sustainable Kosovo as a constructive and complementary element of the region's stability and integration. This means that Kosovo should be open in its relations, not only with Albania but also with Serbia and all other countries of the region. Albania sees the future of Kosovo from the perspective of regional and European integration processes. This future requires democratic standards, such as the consolidation of democratic institutions, the strengthening of the rule of law, the return of Serbs and the normal functioning of a multi-ethnic society there.

The future status of Kosovo must simultaneously satisfy a number of elements and principles, such as the right of all its citizens to express themselves on these and other matters regardless of their ethnic background; the will of the international community; and the need to guarantee the stability of Kosovo and the region itself. The status of Kosovo depends on its stability.

In accordance with its long-term vision of regional cooperation and European integration, Albania has committed itself to promoting further its relations with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The recent upgrading of those diplomatic relations to the ambassadorial level and Albania's initiation of a

number of bilateral agreements are concrete examples of that commitment.

We welcome the recent democratic elections in the Presheva valley, and we strongly believe that those elections will contribute to the strengthening of stability in that region. The integration of Albanians into all levels of the central and local administrations and the protection and respect of their rights will no doubt bring positive developments to that area, to Serbia and to the region at large.

The Albanian Government is interested in developing cooperative and good-neighbourly relations with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. We welcome the democratic elections held recently in that country. We look forward to the early creation of a stable, long-term government, having as its major objective the full implementation of the Ohrid Agreement, the essential condition for the maintenance of peace, stability and democracy and for the continuation of the reforms in our neighbouring republic.

The European integration processes have increased the awareness of Albania and that of the other South-eastern European countries of the role and importance of regional organizations and initiatives. They are efficient instruments that bring countries together, not only in the form of political cooperation, but also by intertwining their interests in many fields, such as trade, transport, culture and education.

Fighting organized crime is another dimension of such cooperation. In March, Albania successfully concluded its chairmanship of the South-East European Cooperation Process, while in April it assumed the presidency of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation. We are confident that, during the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of member States of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation process, to be held in Tirana in October, the participating countries will reaffirm their readiness to strengthen their political and economic cooperation and to translate it into programmes and projects.

One year after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, our hearts still feel the pain of the loss of innocent lives. The endangering of peace, freedom and democratic values — a challenge that faces all United Nations member countries — calls for the creation of a unified front. Terrorism has become a common enemy from which none of us is immune. Nevertheless, our determination to fight that enemy is resolute, and it gives us an opportunity to build a more secure and more peaceful world.

Albania was among the first countries to align themselves with the international coalition against terrorism. This year, in compliance with Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), Albania has taken legislative, executive and administrative actions to fight against that phenomenon. At present, Albania has a complete legal framework that provides for the control, investigation and punishment of potential terrorist acts and of persons who are linked to or support such acts. Albania has become a party to the 12 United Nations Conventions related to the fight against terrorism. The Albanian Government has also taken action to set up and strengthen specific State structures to prevent and fight against terrorism. Those structures are also responsible for and capable of offering full cooperation on an international level.

Albania has praised and supported the activity of the United Nations peacekeeping Mission in Afghanistan and is currently contributing troops to that Mission.

We have followed with deep concern the developments in the Middle East and the threat that Saddam Hussein's regime poses to security, peace and global solidarity against State-backed terrorism. The Albanian Government reaffirms its position, which demands Iraq's full compliance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. Any hesitation or indecisiveness with regard to implementing United Nations decisions and resolutions concerning Iraq would be a challenge to the international community and could have grave consequences for peace and global security. We are convinced that, as President Bush said a few days ago in this Hall, we cannot stand by and do nothing while dangers gather. We must stand up for our security and for the permanent rights and hopes of mankind.

Together with the entire international community, the Albanian Government is following with concern the escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Our position is that a solution to that conflict can be found that will bring about a sustainable and lasting peace. Albania welcomes the steps taken by the international community to bring peace and stability to the Middle East and expresses its confidence that both parties to

the conflict will join the international community in its efforts to find a permanent solution.

Our region faces many challenges that its countries must confront together. The United Nations has an important role to play in uniting the efforts of individual Members to create the necessary synergies to deal with those challenges. Armed conflicts, terrorism and international organized crime, poverty, the violation of human rights, contagious diseases, natural calamities and environmental pollution are problems that require not only the commitment of all our countries, but also coordinated and efficient joint action by the United Nations based on the principles of the Charter. The United Nations must strengthen its role in preventing and resolving conflicts as well as in ensuring peace and stability. In that respect, its cooperation with regional security organizations should continue, based on the best examples of the past. In promoting peace and development, the United Nations should use more efficiently the available financial resources, aiming at their better management but also at tailoring its projects and programmes to the specific needs of beneficiary countries.

The Albanian Government welcomes and supports the efforts of the Secretary-General to reform the Organization and hence to enhance its efficiency.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme and the other specialized agencies of the Organization for their efforts to assist the Albanian Government in implementing its development programmes and projects.

I would like to emphasize that this is a special year for the United Nations. Many important events have taken place in connection with such issues as the rights of children, the ageing of populations, nutrition, the fight against poverty and environmental protection. Albania has contributed to those events. On this occasion, on behalf of the Albanian Government, I would like to pay tribute to the outcomes and initiatives of the Summit on Sustainable Development, held at Johannesburg a few days ago. We are convinced that the commitments undertaken by our countries in connection with those initiatives will soon be embodied in joint efforts aimed at creating a better world for everyone.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency The Honourable Elvin Nimrod, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Trade of Grenada.

Mr. Nimrod (Grenada): My delegation congratulates Mr. Jan Kavan on his election as President of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, and we thank his predecessor, Mr. Han Seung-soo, for his effective conduct of the fifty-sixth session. We also pay tribute to the Secretary-General for his enlightened and progressive leadership.

In addition, we warmly welcome Switzerland into the family of nations, and we look forward with pleasure to the admission of East Timor.

When the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly was convened a year ago, shockwaves were reverberating across the United States and around the world as a result of the traumatic and cataclysmic events of 11 September. My country's thoughts and prayers continue to be with the people of the United States, especially those who have suffered irreparable loss. As the curtain rises on the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, there is evidence that some dark clouds have lifted, thanks to the solidarity of the international community, which has galvanized into taking action to prevent such dastardly and heinous terrorist attacks.

Nevertheless, there is a need for vigilance, as demonstrated by the Counter-Terrorism Committee created to oversee the implementation of the landmark Security Council resolution 1373 (2001). Grenada has given its full support and commitment to this resolution by using scarce financial and human resources to implement security measures and new counter-terrorism strategies, including national legislation to conform with the resolution.

In this connection, we appeal for assistance from willing partners in the fight against terrorism and the concomitant trade in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances that traverses our region via the Caribbean Sea. This waterway must be maintained as a zone of peace in the context of sustainable development, free also from pollutants and nuclear waste.

The general debate is taking place in the continuing shadow of 11 September, which has adversely affected the global economy and the social situation in developed countries. However, the

spillovers have affected, much more profoundly, small developing countries such as my own. Particularly hard-hit has been the tourism industry, which is a major source of foreign exchange. Tourist arrivals by air and sea have decreased significantly, due in large measure to increased security arrangements introduced in international transportation and, of course, the natural fear of travelling. Loss of revenue in tourism affects the hotel industry, employment, transportation, banking, agriculture and other tourism activities that help to sustain the economy of my country.

The next hardest hit sector is trade. Conventional economic wisdom says that poor developing countries must grow their way out of poverty. Trade offers the best hope, because it is the engine of growth and development.

Many products from developing countries face untold obstacles in entering the markets of the rich developed countries. In this connection, the decline in trade, especially primary commodities, has a direct relation on developing countries' ability to import goods essential for development. According to the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Mr. Horst Köhler, the true test of the credibility of wealthy nations' efforts to combat poverty lies in their willingness to open up their markets and phase out trade-distorting subsidies in areas where developing countries have a comparative advantage, as in agriculture, processed foods, textiles, clothing and light manufactures.

Grenada fully understands the critical role that international trade plays in the alleviation of poverty. However, improved market access is a necessity for the development of smaller nations. We, therefore, reiterate our call to the more developed nations to make a concerted effort to reduce trade barriers and tariffs, which impede poorer developing countries from full participation in the global economy.

One result of 11 September has been to further exacerbate the inequality between the developing and the developed countries as trading partners in the free play of market forces. According to the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the challenge now is to make the multilateral trading system more development-friendly.

Now, more than ever, the concerns of developing countries, enunciated at the third session of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Seattle and emphasized at the Fourth World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference in Doha, should be the global agenda to fight poverty in developing countries. The Doha ministerial declaration, adopted in November of 2001, reaffirmed the need for special and differential treatment as stated in that paragraph 3 declaration:

> "We recognize the particular vulnerability of the least developed countries ... we are committed ... to improving their effective participation in the multilateral trading system." (TRADE/2002/1, pp. 9-10)

In Grenada, our imports declined by 10.9 per cent in 2001, following a 20 per cent increase just the year before. Our exports performed even worse by registering a 24 per cent decline in 2001, as compared to a 13 per cent increase the previous year. The effect on our growth rate was not surprising. The economy grew by 3.4 per cent in 2001, compared to 6.6 per cent in the year 2000.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic casts a dark shadow over the General Assembly's global agenda. HIV/AIDS has become not only a health pandemic, but also a threat to the development of international peace and security. This disease constitutes a global emergency, as it affects every country of the world; not a single one is immune. The Pan American Health Organization has reported that an estimated 2.8 million people in the Americas are currently living with AIDS. Out of that number, 420,000 in the Caribbean are infected. The Caribbean is second only to sub-Saharan Africa in incidence and mortality rates.

HIV/AIDS poses a drain on the scarce resources of the small economies, like Grenada's, whose revenues have been further negatively impacted by last year's horrific events. The Caribbean is facing a serious problem with the disease, and there is no way that our small countries can stem the ravages of HIV/AIDS without a massive infusion of resources.

The Caribbean urgently needs financial and human resources for education and counselling in preventative measures and treatment, with respect to HIV/AIDS and the opportunistic diseases, such as tuberculosis and others. Moreover, the availability of medicine and the ability to purchase it constitute the greatest challenge.

We applaud the establishment in 2002 of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. We are also thankful to the Pan American Health Organization and the World Health Organization (WHO) representative offices for assistance in the facilitation, implementation and technical evaluation of many projects in the Caribbean region. However, there is much more to be done, and the costs are overwhelming.

The World Summit on Sustainable Development, recently ended in Johannesburg, and its precursor, the International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Monterrey, and the conclusions of the Millennium Summit are all blueprints for sustainable development. The common thread in all the final documents is poverty eradication. Poverty, hunger and disease constitute a chain of misery with devastating physical, mental and psychological consequences.

The Secretary-General summarized the nature of the challenges to human development best in the introduction of his report to the Preparatory Committee for the High-level International Intergovernmental Event on Financing for Development:

> "As the new century dawns, there can be no task more urgent for the United Nations than that fixed by the Millennium Summit of rescuing one billion men, women and children from 'abject and dehumanizing poverty'". (A/AC.257/12, para.1)

Grenada's stated position at the World Summit on Sustainable Development is as follows: if sustainable development is to become a reality, our focus must be on the health and social well-being of the world's peoples. Clean water, unpolluted air and food security are rights, not privileges.

What is required now is not the elaboration of further final documents, replete with grand phraseology and pious pronouncements, but the implementation of the existing ones that are most appropriate to the human condition. This brings to mind the need to implement the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) embodied in Agenda 21.

The President took the Chair.

We are hopeful that there will be a comprehensive review of the Barbados Plan of Action in 2004 in Mauritius so that the difficulties that small islands face in the pursuit of sustainable development will be considerably reduced.

As a matter of urgency, the United Nations, its agencies and willing stakeholders and partners should seek to implement the first Millennium Goal: the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger by 2015.

Grenada awaits the time when the United Nations will include the Republic of China on Taiwan in its membership. The Government of Grenada has close and collaborative ties with the Republic of China and has witnessed its economic achievements, seen demonstrations of its democratic principles, and is cognizant of the dedication of its people to international norms and ideals. In this spirit Grenada calls for the full membership of the Republic of China on Taiwan in the United Nations. We are convinced that the Republic of China on Taiwan meets the standards for United Nations membership, since it has a democratic Government and possesses the attributes of a nation-State. Indeed, the Republic of China on Taiwan has tremendous potential to provide inputs for the further development of the international community, as recognized by the World Trade Organization.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), conceptualized by African leaders and welcomed at the Summit of the Group of Eight industrialized countries (G-8), represents an idea whose time has come. The international community too welcomed NEPAD a few days ago, when it was presented by a high-level panel of African heads of State or Government during the present session of the General Assembly.

Implementation of NEPAD in partnership with the developed countries will mark the dawn of a new era for the economic development of Africa's abundant natural resources. Thus, Africa, one of the largest and most centrally located continents, can become the breadbasket of the world. Grenada as part of the African diaspora, hails NEPAD with great expectation and excitement.

The United Nations has the ability, with the involvement of its Members, to make a difference. It is the international forum that struggles with and attempts to find solutions to difficult global problems. Grenada has been watching closely the developments in international peace and security; economic development; social advancement and cooperation; the

fight against HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria and other threatening diseases; environmental sustainability; and a plethora of other regional, national and international issues.

For small countries such as Grenada, attending international conferences presents a paradox. We aspire to be integrally involved in these important conferences, yet financial constraints sometimes outweigh the benefits of being in attendance. Our absence, as many other small nations would agree, should not by any means be construed as a lack of interest. Enormous expectations and optimism must be balanced with a degree of realism. My delegation assures the General Assembly that it fully supports the efforts of the United Nations to face the many challenges that arise.

However, we must ensure that the many decisions taken at the United Nations summit conferences are implemented. But the goals must be achievable and beneficial to all Member States.

The President: Before I give the floor to the next speaker, let me once again remind members of the agreed time limit of 15 minutes and appeal to them to adhere to it.

I now call on His Excellency Mr. Ioannis Kasoulides, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cyprus.

Mr. Kasoulides (Cyprus): I would like, Sir, to extend to you my warmest congratulations on your election as President of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. I have no doubt that your long experience and proven diplomatic skills will successfully steer the work of this session. I would also like to extend my appreciation to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Han Seung-soo, for his effective and determined guidance during the work of the fifty-sixth session.

Cyprus joins other States in extending a warm welcome to the newest Member of the United Nations, Switzerland, and we look forward also to welcoming East Timor.

The opening of this session coincides with a time of overwhelming challenges for the international community. The fact that the global problems are so numerous demands a determined and collective response and necessitates the enhancement of the role of the United Nations as the leading mechanism in securing world peace and stability.

Cyprus would like to reaffirm its strong devotion to the United Nations and its commitment to the cause of international cooperation and multilateralism, so eloquently advocated and defended in the Secretary-General's statement to the General Assembly on 12 September 2002.

It is our firm belief that the international community should act in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter and that all United Nations resolutions should be implemented. Such an approach will not only enhance the credibility of the Organization, but will also facilitate the achievement of permanent solutions based on objectivity, justice and international law.

In the case of Cyprus, numerous resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council have yet to be implemented. Contrary to its obligations under the Charter, Turkey shows its defiance by calling for the acceptance of the so-called realities brought about by its aggression. Twenty-eight years have passed since the tragic summer of 1974, and the people of Cyprus, both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, are still suffering from the terrible consequences of the Turkish invasion and the continuing military occupation of 37 per cent of the Republic's territory.

The Government of Cyprus, however, does not want to engage in polemics with Turkey. On the contrary, we believe that we should move beyond confrontation towards a common future of prosperity, democracy and regional cooperation. In this respect, both sides should seize the moment and take advantage of the current window of opportunity for the achievement of a just and viable settlement of the Cyprus problem, based on Security Council resolutions, which represent the verdict of the international community and its collective wisdom.

The time to engage in a serious, meaningful dialogue is now, given the unique convergence of positive factors, including the renewed interest of the international community, the personal involvement and commitment of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, to whom we express our appreciation, and the European Union accession process for Cyprus.

Regrettably, the international community has yet to see the greatly anticipated change of attitude on the Turkish side. The Security Council, in its statement of 9 July, authoritatively declared that

> "the Turkish Cypriot side had been less constructive in its approach so far, and had declined to support the goal of resolving the core issues". (*Press Release SC/7444*)

The Council also strongly underscored the need for the Turkish side to cooperate fully in the ongoing effort for a comprehensive settlement, taking into full consideration the relevant Security Council resolutions and treaties.

We invite Turkey and the Turkish-Cypriot leadership to heed the call of the international community and abandon its unacceptable policy of division and communal segregation. Their position in favour of a "two sovereign States" solution and of the denial of the rights of refugees to their property represents an anachronism in a globalized world — a world in which we view diversity as an enrichment and are bound together by integration, the quest for democracy and the rule of law. Most importantly, such a policy cannot lead to a settlement or to reconciliation, and would thus perpetuate the suffering and the plight of all Cypriots. We call on the Turkish side to respect Security Council resolutions, and the high-level agreements signed by Mr. Denktash himself, which provide for a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation and which envision a State with a single sovereignty, single citizenship and a single international character.

In keeping with the interests of our people and with the need for regional stability, our vision for Cyprus represents a departure from the passions of the past. We see the future of our country in a reunited federal State, with membership in the European Union and with the human rights and fundamental freedoms of each and every citizen fully protected. We are aware that the overwhelming majority of Turkish Cypriots share this vision and long for reunification and for a common future in the European Union, with all the safeguards of a modern, democratic and effective State. They know that the accession of Cyprus would offer to all its citizens security and social and economic advancement, especially for the Turkish Cypriot community.

As for our side, President Clerides, who has been participating in the talks in a constructive and positive manner, thereby earning the respect of the international community, will continue to show determination and farsightedness so as to fully safeguard the interests of Cyprus and its people.

One year has passed since the heinous attacks of 11 September, which dramatically changed the international political climate. The immediate actions of the United Nations in the aftermath of the attacks reaffirmed the strong determination of the international community to counteract the global threat of terrorism, which transcends geographical regions and religions.

Cyprus believes in the necessity of global mobilization and collective action against terrorism, under the auspices of the United Nations. It has become evident that in the fight against terrorism, the importance of an individual country is not related to its size or its geographic location. Every State has a vital contribution to make in the struggle to combat this threat to our common values. The Government of the Republic of Cyprus reaffirms its commitment to this struggle through full implementation of all relevant international conventions and protocols relating to terrorism, as well as of Security Council resolutions. Our determination has been explicitly stated at the highest level and through our ratification of all 12 of the international conventions and protocols pertaining to international terrorism.

Two recent international events deserve special mention, since they have created a momentum for international cooperation on issues of a political, economic, environmental and legal nature. The first session of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute was a veritable landmark in combating impunity and deterring genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and aggression.

On the other hand, the World Summit on Sustainable Development reaffirmed the necessity for coordinated and effective international action in the form of a joint effort to overcome the challenges of economic disparity and environmental degradation. It is now imperative to achieve the effective implementation of all the commitments that have been undertaken. Turning a blind eye to nature's warnings will exacerbate the problem and make their consequences for the global ecosystem irreversible.

Cyprus also reiterates the need for joint efforts to implement the Millennium Development Goals and the Monterrey Consensus. Moreover, my country attaches particular importance to strengthening the New Partnership for Africa's Development, which represents a viable opportunity for the African continent to escape marginalization and underdevelopment.

The situation in the Middle East remains fragile; its repercussions could seriously threaten stability far beyond the region. Cyprus, as a neighbouring State with close relations to the parties involved, supports all initiatives aimed at achieving a just settlement, based on international law and United Nations resolutions, including the efforts of the Quartet. Such a settlement would lead to both peace and stability and would ensure normal relations and security for all the countries of the region. It would also have to include the fulfilment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people through the creation of their own State and the termination of occupation. Most importantly, it would put an end to violence and reinforce the voices of moderation and cooperation. We reiterate our condemnation of all acts of terror, including suicide bombings. As in the past, we stand ready to assist the parties in any way they feel that we can contribute, including by hosting meetings on the island.

Cyprus attaches great importance to the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. It will therefore continue to support international action aimed at strengthening multilateral instruments on disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In this spirit, I wish to inform the Assembly that the Government of the Republic of Cyprus has recently proceeded, in cooperation with the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, with the destruction of a significant number of weapons and has decided unilaterally to demine the buffer zone. Moreover, Cyprus is in the final stage of ratifying the Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel mines.

The general debate of this session is nearing its end. The distinct focus of this session has been the galvanization of world opinion with respect to the necessity of implementing United Nations resolutions. Cyprus has long been advocating respect for all United Nations resolutions, without double standards or exceptions. We are convinced that this would bring us closer to the shared vision of collective security, peace and justice envisioned by the founding fathers of the Organization.

The President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Filomena Masaarenhas Tipote, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Guinea-Bissau.

Ms. Tipote (Guinea-Bissau) (*spoke in Portuguese; interpretation from French text furnished by the delegation*): First of all, I would like to thank the outgoing President of the General Assembly, Mr. Han Seung-soo, for the superb manner in which he led the work of the fifty-sixth session of the Assembly.

Permit me, Sir, to congratulate you on your election to the presidency of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, and to express my best wishes for success in your work at the head of this important body. It is with enormous satisfaction that, on behalf of the President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, Mr. Kumba Yalá, we welcome Switzerland as a Member of the United Nations. We also look forward to welcoming the Republic of Timor-Leste, a member of our community of Portuguese-speaking countries.

The loss of human lives can never be justified by a cause, no matter what its noble goals. Just a year ago, the people of Guinea-Bissau joined their voices to those of the international community in condemning all acts of terrorism and all actions which would threaten international security.

We are convinced of the lofty ideals of democracy, in which human security becomes the pillar of society's development. Therefore, on my own account and on behalf of the people of Guinea-Bissau, I condemn the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, and we reiterate our conviction that the only way in which to combat such infamy is to unite all our efforts under the auspices of the United Nations.

Our readiness to cooperate in the quest for solutions that will guarantee peace and stability in our subregion is great, although the internal conflicts in neighbouring countries inevitably entail costs in the defence and security areas. They also compel us to sacrifice the meagre budgets of priority sectors of the Government's programme, such as health and education.

The progressive establishment of democracy, human rights, international cooperation and development will restore the dignity of our people. Convinced of this, we are developing partnerships with the United Nations system to combat poverty in Guinea-Bissau. We continue to make sacrifices to pave the way for development. These sacrifices include interruptions in the normal course of development in a State where the 1998 conflict bore witness to the evils of a people's poverty, and to the destruction of the

precarious structures of a new State in a region where there are pockets of conflict that tend to cross borders, and thus to increase the climate of instability.

The Senegalese conflict, in the Casamance region, provides an example of our resolve to help find consensus solutions to put an end to many years of armed conflict in the neighbouring Republic of Senegal. Respect for the Charter of the Organization of African Unity as it relates to the retention of the borders inherited from colonialism calls for Guinea-Bissau's participation in efforts to establish peace and stability in a united and indivisible Senegal.

Based on this conviction, our country supports the efforts of the People's Republic of China towards peaceful reunification, under the theme of "one nation, two systems."

The economic and financial difficulties faced by the Government of Guinea-Bissau have been the object of attention by the members of the Security Council. It is clear that peacekeeping efforts cannot be divorced from the need to preserve economic and social stability in Guinea-Bissau. Thus, progress on peacekeeping, on economic recovery and on development in Guinea-Bissau are interdependent.

Guinea-Bissau, a member of the African Union, is involved in the struggle for peace, stability, democracy, the defence of human rights, cooperation, development, prosperity and human dignity. We are bound, furthermore, by our national poverty reduction strategy to contribute to the socio-economic programme to revitalize our continent, following the broader approach of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

It is clear to Guinea-Bissau that the United Nations, as a forum for dealing with questions related to world peace, respect for human rights, the eradication of poverty and the promotion of sustainable development worldwide, is encouraging and contributing in practical ways to the success of NEPAD and to ensuring that the commitments entered into in Doha, Monterrey and Johannesburg will be effectively implemented.

Guinea-Bissau remains committed to finding solutions to its difficult socio-economic situation, and appeals to the international community to contribute to the implementation of our national poverty reduction strategy.

I would like to recognize the intelligent, patriotic manner in which Angola put an end to long years of conflict, as well as the progress made towards the resolution of the conflicts in Senegal, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi and the Comoros.

Dialogue is the best instrument for restoring peace and working towards stability and development for humanity. That is why we encourage the actors in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to join in the effort to find acceptable solutions to bring about concrete security and prosperity for both peoples. Strict compliance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002) will be the only response acceptable to the Assembly and the only proof that the parties recognize the incalculable value of our Organization.

To realize the promises contained in the Millennium Declaration and in the United Nations Charter, which would guarantee a more prosperous and just world, we join in the appeal made to the leaders of Iraq to abide by Security Council resolutions with respect to Chapter VII of the Charter, in order to avoid a possible Council decision.

Guinea-Bissau shares the need for broader and more effective participation in the work of the Security Council, which is a vital organ of the Organization.

Permit me to recall that reducing poverty in the poorest countries, such as ours, will guarantee the prosperity, stability, peace and security of the entire world and is the best way to neutralize terrorism.

We speak out in the struggle against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and for the creation of conditions which will allow access to basic resources such as water, to education and to the protein necessary for healthy growth.

Solidarity among peoples is and will continue to be the guarantee that we will be able to bequeath to future generations the legacy of a prosperous world.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liberia, His Excellency Mr. Monie Captan.

Mr. Captan (Liberia): It is my pleasing duty to once again participate in this auspicious forum on behalf of Mr. Charles Ghankay Taylor, President of the Republic of Liberia, and to contribute to the debate of this General Assembly.

At the outset, I wish to congratulate Mr. Jan Kavan for his election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session and to assure him of the full cooperation and support of the Liberian delegation.

I also seize this opportunity to commend the outgoing President, Mr. Han Seung-Soo of the Republic of Korea, for the efficient and capable manner in which he conducted the affairs of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

It is my pleasing duty to congratulate the gallant people of East Timor on their relentless struggle for self-determination, leading to their independence this year. It is also a privilege for me and my Government to welcome and congratulate Switzerland on its admission to membership of the United Nations.

A year ago, the world was plunged into deep sadness as a result of gruesome acts of terrorism committed right here in New York City and elsewhere in the United States of America. In the wake of these barbaric acts, we all entered a solemn collective pledge to battle terrorism wherever it may exist. Consequently, there was not only a strong condemnation of terrorism, but also firm support for the campaign against organized terrorist networks. We wish to reaffirm our support for Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) and the United Nations conventions and protocols aimed at combating terrorism. The Government of Liberia has forwarded those conventions not yet ratified to the Liberian National Legislature for ratification.

The consolidated and coordinated response necessitated by terrorist attacks requires a firm commitment to ensuring the passage of comprehensive legislations to meet the new dimensions of terrorism, the adoption of strict financial control regulations to curtail funding for terrorism, the strengthening of customs and immigration controls, the strict enforcement of laws regulating arms traffic, and the liberalization of the extradition conditions for persons suspected of engaging in terrorism.

In the global war against terrorism, we must further act to combat the root causes of terrorism. This means that there is a need to take concrete steps to combat deprivation, alienation, rejection, misery and poverty.

Recent developments in the Middle East involving Israel and the Palestinians are a cause for grave concern, requiring urgent and concrete actions to halt violence in that region. Both the Israelis and Palestinians have justified claims, which must be resolved in a manner other than the use of excessive violence. Violence cannot produce peace, neither can it be an arbiter of claims.

My Government is in full support of constructive efforts that will help both sides to return to political dialogue in their search for a negotiated settlement. We therefore urge all stakeholders and facilitators of the Middle East peace process to undertake meaningful actions that will reduce the current level of antagonism and violence in the region and to avoid any further aggravation of the situation in the Middle East. As we say in Liberia, "Let us not use fire to put out a fire."

At the formation of the United Nations 57 years ago, most of Africa was still under colonial rule and therefore Africa's participation in the creation of a global mechanism for collective security was limited to Liberia, Ethiopia, Egypt and apartheid South Africa. Today, Africa has formed itself into the African Union and represents over 25 per cent of the membership of the United Nations. Despite this fact, and considering that most of the conflicts under consideration by the Security Council are African conflicts, the continent's participation in the deliberations of the Security Council is grossly limited to non-permanent representation with no right of veto. In essence, Africa has no real voice in our world body even as it deliberates on issues affecting our very existence as a continent. This situation must change. Africa's contribution to collective security cannot be limited to participation in a debate that has no binding effect on decisions taken by the post-war Powers.

Building upon the Organization of African Unity's Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, the African Union has established a Peace and Security Council to promote peace, security and stability in Africa, anticipate and prevent conflict, develop a common defence policy, and promote and implement peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction activities. That organ will provide the capacity for the management of African conflicts by Africans and will thus form the initial basis for Africa's contribution to collective peace and security.

Many African States, including Liberia, have provided peacekeepers to United Nations-mandated peacekeeping missions around the world. Africa has come of age to contribute to international peace and security, not only because Africa has the capacity to do so, but also, more importantly, because Africa is a principal stakeholder in international peace and security. Liberia therefore calls for the permanent representation of Africa on the Security Council with the right of veto. This is the resolve of all Africans.

The Government of Liberia considers the present sanctions regime imposed on Liberia through Security Council resolutions 1343 (2001) and 1408 (2002) as punitive and unjust. Not only are the sanctions unjust, but they have also created a grave humanitarian crisis throughout the country. Although the Government of Liberia has always regarded as unjust, unjustified and punitive the imposition of United Nations sanctions on the country, it has nevertheless consistently cooperated with the Security Council, thus upholding that organ's integrity.

The Government of Liberia is in full compliance with the demands contained in paragraph 2(a) to (d) of Security Council resolution 1343 (2001). These demands constitute the only conditions for the lifting of the sanctions on Liberia, as provided for in paragraph 6 of resolution 1408 (2002). Essentially, these demands called for the cessation of support for the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), intended to lead to progress in the peace process in Sierra Leone. In order to ensure compliance with these demands, the resolution imposed several punitive sanctions on Liberia.

No one can dispute the fact that peace has been restored to Sierra Leone and that the RUF no longer exists. The defunct RUF has been demobilized and disarmed by the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). The RUF was transformed into a political party, the Revolutionary United Front Party (RUFP), which contested the elections in Sierra Leone on 14 April 2002. All Sierra Leoneans, including the RUFP, have accepted the results of the elections without any challenge to the democratically elected Government of Sierra Leone. The Government of Liberia was represented at the inauguration of the President of Sierra Leone and fully recognizes the Government of President Alhaji Ahmad Tejan Kabbah as the legitimate and democratically elected Government of Sierra Leone.

Liberia is host to many Sierra Leonean refugees. The policy of the Government of Liberia has been to encourage the voluntary repatriation of all Sierra Leonean refugees, in keeping with relevant international conventions. To this end, the Government of Liberia has facilitated the repatriation of Sierra Leonean refugees by the Government of Sierra Leone and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a process that is ongoing.

Since February of this year, 12,500 Sierra Leonean refugees have been repatriated to Sierra Leone. Another 5,000 have registered for repatriation with the embassy of Sierra Leone in Monrovia and UNHCR. At present, there are 25,000 Sierra Leonean refugees still residing in Liberia under the care of UNHCR.

How is it conceivable that Liberia can today continue to be punished by the Security Council on allegations of supporting a non-existent RUF in a non-existent war in Sierra Leone, while the Liberian Government provides protection for thousands of Sierra Leonean refugees in Liberia?

It is conceivable because of the failure to differentiate between demands and punitive sanctions. The condition for the lifting of the sanctions, according to the resolution, is compliance with the demands. However, the sanctions have not been lifted because the focus is not on the condition precedent for its lifting, but on the sanctions themselves, as though punitive sanctions were ends in themselves. It is illogical to suggest that the condition required for lifting the sanctions is the sanctions themselves. To assert that would suggest that one would be rewarded with a privilege if one refrained from exercising that privilege. It is therefore confusing to speak in terms of alleged violations of the sanctions as though they were indicators of compliance with the demands, when, in fact, it is compliance with the specific demands of the Security Council resolution that constitutes the only condition for lifting the sanctions.

In its last report on Liberia, the United Nations Panel of Experts rightfully raised the moral dilemma regarding the continuance of sanctions against Liberia when the war in Sierra Leone was over. However, that moral dilemma was not a dilemma for those subjecting Liberia to unjust punitive sanctions, as morality had no place in their political consideration.

If regional peace and security are the objectives of the victimization of Liberia, how, then, do we explain the conspiracy of silence surrounding the prevailing war in Liberia waged by externally supported armed non-State actors? Can one reasonably expect peace to be consolidated in Sierra Leone or maintained in the Mano River Union region when aggression against Liberia is left unchecked? What accounts for that conspiracy? Is it due to double standards or to malice?

The current arms embargo imposed on Liberia in the midst of a war waged against Liberia by externally supported armed non-State actors has caused the displacement of a third of the population, resulting in a humanitarian crisis in the country. The arms embargo has encouraged the war against Liberia because of the perceived weakness of the Government to effectively defend its territory. Furthermore, it should be noted that the countries providing arms and ammunition to the non-State actors operating in Liberia are in violation of the arms embargo, and the Security Council cannot ignore their actions.

The arms embargo imposed on Liberia is a flagrant violation of Liberia's inherent right under Article 51 of the Charter to defend itself against armed attacks. That violation has not only led to impairment of the Government's capacity to defend the nation; it has also contributed to the resulting humanitarian crisis that is the cause of immense human suffering in Liberia.

The combined impact of the sanctions and the ongoing war in Liberia is telling on every aspect of life in the country. The sanctions have exacerbated the problem of a fragile economy and have imposed suffering on an already vulnerable population. According to statistics of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the unemployment rate in Liberia is estimated at 85 per cent, while 80 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line. Donor assistance to United Nations specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations operating in Liberia has substantially declined since the imposition of sanctions.

The education and health sectors have suffered serious disruptions since the imposition of sanctions. Over 60 per cent of the children between the ages of 5 and 14 years were in school in 2000, compared with about 45 per cent today. Infant mortality and life expectancy rates have significantly deteriorated. Infant mortality, which was 117 per 1,000 births in the year 2000, is now estimated at over 130, while life expectancy has declined from 54 to 47. Of the 16 functioning hospitals and 25 health centres that were operating in the country in 2000, only 11 hospitals and 15 health centres are still operating. At present, there are 59,370 persons per doctor.

Prior to the sanctions, over 100,000 Liberians were engaged in artisanal mining of diamonds, either as operators or labourers. Taking into consideration the average size of the extended family, which is 7, that brings the number of Liberians directly or indirectly impacted by the Security Council ban on Liberian diamonds to more than 700,000.

A student at the University of Liberia wrote the following in an assignment paper:

> "The United Nations euphemism 'selective sanctions' is a laughable oxymoron, if not a myth. The attempt to strangulate and destroy the Liberian Government can in no way provide a foolproof assurance that will guarantee the immunity of ordinary Liberians from such strangulation ... To regard the sanctions as selective, one should, firstly, bury his conscience to the plight of Liberians in their everyday living. Sanctions are not selective when Liberians are denied income and employment opportunities, or when primeval darkness cannot become obsolete in the face of modernity ... It is time, high time, that the United Nations abandon its destruction of the Liberian nation State."

I join my compatriot in calling on the Security Council to bring an end to the suffering and victimization of Liberians by acting urgently to lift all sanctions imposed on our vulnerable country.

Despite the current state of emergency and critical conditions created as a result of United Nations sanctions and the war waged by externally supported armed non-State actors, the Government of Liberia remains committed to democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights, national reconciliation and national unity. To that end, a national reconciliation conference has been organized by a steering committee comprised of persons representing a cross section of Liberian society. The first national plenary of the conference was launched on 24 August 2002. The conference was divided into five thematic subgroups:

finance and management, culture and history, good governance, education and communication, and national security.

Current diplomatic initiatives undertaken to bring about peace in Liberia are proceeding at two levels, that of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and that of Mano River Union, which are parallel processes. At the ECOWAS level, the objective of the process is the facilitation of a peace process, especially with regard to bringing an end to the activities of armed non-State actors, leading to an end to the ongoing war inside Liberia. At the Mano River Union level, the objective of the process is to build confidence among member States of the Mano River Union, the development of political will to ensure good neighbourliness and the consequent implementation of all decisions and protocols of the Mano River Union, including those decisions taken subsequent to the Moroccan initiative. His Majesty the King of Morocco, who has maintained consultations with the United Nations and major Powers, currently facilitates that process.

Those parallel initiatives complement each other and are not mutually exclusive. Settlement of the internal conflict requires the cooperation of neighbouring States. The destabilization of Liberia by armed non-State actors and the resultant humanitarian crisis have been and continue to be sustained by external support, and no internal settlement can be sustained in the absence of the cooperation of the neighbouring States of the Mano River Union and ECOWAS. It is therefore important to encourage the Moroccan and ECOWAS initiatives as complementary efforts and not to perceive those efforts as working at cross purposes.

The restoration of peace and security to Liberia can only be facilitated by ending the activities of armed non-State actors, who sustain their activities through external support. That would, therefore, require, as an essential beginning, the cutting off of all external support to armed non-State actors. The achievement of that objective will require that the Mano River Union member States adhere to the Non-Aggression and Security Cooperation Treaty of the Mano River Union, implement the 15th protocol to the Declaration of the Mano River Union and implement all Mano River Union decisions pursuant to the provisions of the 15th protocol and those arising from the Moroccan initiative. Fundamental among those decisions is the decision of the Joint Security Committee, taken in Conakry, Republic of Guinea, on 10 September 2001, regarding the endemic problems of dissidents. That decision called for the apprehension and repatriation to their country of origin of all individuals, armed groups and other paramilitary forces involved in the destabilization of member States.

The ongoing war waged by externally supported armed non-State actors against the democratically elected Government of Liberia is a result of the total disregard and violation of the agreements and decisions of the Mano River Union. That war must be brought to an end. The decision of the Mano River Union on the endemic problems of dissidents was antecedent to the end of the war in Sierra Leone and intended to put an end to the destabilization of the region by armed non-State actors and to create a mechanism for sustainable peace and security within the Mano River Union region. It is, therefore, imperative that no ambiguous signals are sent to the armed non-State actors who are currently destabilizing Liberia; otherwise, the efforts of the Mano River Union, the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone and the international community as a whole to consolidate peace and security would be futile, and would thus undermine the security of the entire region. It is, therefore, imperative that all armed non-State actors be fully disarmed as an integral part of the efforts of the international community to restore peace to the Mano River Union region.

The consistent denial of the United Nations to admit the Republic of China on Taiwan into this world body is a violation of Article 4 of the Charter, which specifically states that

> "Membership in the United Nations is open to all other peace-loving States which accept the obligations contained in the present Charter and, in the judgement of the Organization, are able and willing to carry out these obligations."

The 23 million peace-loving people of the Republic of China deserve to be represented in the United Nations. They have demonstrated their capacity and willingness fully to live up to the obligations of States Members of the United Nations, as they have demonstrated in other world bodies. It is therefore the conviction of the Liberian Government that the Republic of China should be allowed representation and participation in this world body. The Liberian Government continues to hold the view that it is the

Chinese people themselves, under the principles of democracy and of respect for human rights, who will one day resolve the question of Chinese reunification. Liberia encourages the continuation of the cross-straits dialogue in the interest of the greater good of the Chinese people.

Some scholars are of the view that the calculated objective of some sanctions is the achievement of a threshold of domestic suffering that will cause the people to rise up and overthrow their Government. If this is true, then it is also true that some sanctions are not intended to achieve compliance with United Nations demands, but to precipitate regime change through rebellion against internal conditions of suffering caused by sanctions. This may also explain the indifference and insensitivity to the suffering of people living in States under sanctions.

In the case of Liberia, the call for a study of the potential impact of sanctions took effect only after the imposition of sanctions, which gave an appearance of some humanitarian concern for the people of Liberia. Nevertheless, after 16 months of the application of punitive sanctions against Liberia, the Security Council is still trying to determine the impact of its sanctions on our people. Will death represent an impact sufficient to bring about some form of moral consternation and restraint? But for every day that a Liberian must face the agony of sanctions, the integrity of the United Nations is undermined and its conscience put to the test.

The Liberian people consider their current suffering at the hands of the Security Council a betrayal of the dream and aspiration which inspired their forefathers to join in the formation of the United Nations. With the benefit of hindsight, the Government would have toiled in anguish as it participated in the San Francisco Conference in 1945; not in doubt of the principles we ascribed to, but in fear of the potential to distort those sacred principles.

Yet we remain resolute and true to the ideals and principles enshrined in the Charter, and we commit ourselves to working with unrelenting perseverance for the realization of peace, freedom, liberty and justice for all peoples.

The President: Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I should like to express my conviction that even the most important and complex message can be expressed in the agreed 15 minutes; I speak from my own experience. I appeal once again to speakers to conform to the agreed time limit.

I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Yusuf Hassan Ibraahim, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Somalia.

Mr. Ibraahim (Somalia): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. I am confident that with your experience you will guide this session to a fruitful conclusion. I would also like to extend my thanks to your predecessor, Ambassador Han Seung-soo of South Korea, for his excellent stewardship of the previous session of the General Assembly.

Somalia welcomes the Democratic Republic of East Timor and the Swiss Confederation to the membership of this family of nations. This is a further step towards the realization of the goal of the universality of the United Nations Organization.

A year after the tragic events of 11 September 2001, we in Somalia continue to share the feelings of pain and loss of the Government and the people of the United States. We must, as a community of nations, act in unison to combat the scourge of terrorism.

In this regard, the Transitional National Government of Somalia continues to be a reliable partner in the campaign against terrorism. It is my privilege to announce to the Assembly that my Government this year signed the Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism.

We have also started the process of acceding to the Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism of the African Union. We are also working on the implementation of the other requirements of resolution 1373 (2001). Furthermore, we are committed to fully cooperating with other countries on a bilateral basis in the fight against terrorism and continue to identify concrete areas of such cooperation. My Government's resolve in this regard is not based on any short-term tactical considerations but is unequivocal and based on solid principles.

We would like to commend the United Nations for organizing a number of international conferences in 2002, starting with the International Conference on Financing for Development and the recent World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg, South Africa. We also applaud the

United Nations for dedicating a day of discussions on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which focused on the development needs of the African continent.

We strongly feel that the international community should pay more attention to the development needs of the least developed countries. Donors and creditors should be able to do much more in the areas of trade, debt and aid. We believe that free and fair trade is a vehicle for growth and development, and that thus we are required to make greater efforts to ensure that multilateral trading caters to the urgent and special needs of the least developed countries.

In this regard, we are encouraged by Canada's unilateral decision to lift tariffs on African exports to Canada and to abolish subsidies on agricultural products. It is our hope that other developed countries will follow the example set by Canada.

With regard to debt, we believe that, unless the massive debts owed by the least developed countries are completely cancelled, those countries will remain strangled by interest and loan principal payments.

Aid can be another engine for development and growth and, in this respect, the donors must honour the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance.

We cannot but address the plight of the Palestinian people, who are subjected to daily horrors. The killing of innocent civilians, including women and children, the destruction of houses and the daily humiliations inflicted upon the Palestinian people by Israel must be condemned by the international community.

It is unconscionable for the international community to stand idly by and watch the continuous siege of President Yasser Arafat and the premeditated destruction of the Palestinian Authority. The people of Palestine, who continue to suffer under the Israeli occupation, have an inalienable right to a State of their own and to choose their own leadership and institutions. The systematic violation of the fundamental human rights of the Palestinian people must be brought to an end.

The scourge of conflicts has been afflicting the African continent for decades. In fact, Africa at one time was dubbed the "continent of conflict". It is gratifying to note that there is a new horizon — that a new dawn is illuminating the darker parts of our continent in conflict. Conflict resolution by Africans themselves is the motto today. A strong wind of peace is blowing in Africa. In Sierra Leone and Liberia in the Mano river region; in Angola; in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Burundi in the Great Lakes region; and in Ethiopia, Eritrea and the Sudan in the Horn of Africa, the ship of peace is sailing. We strongly welcome this movement towards peace in the African continent.

As members are aware, Somalia has been an area of a conflict, a conflict that brought untold suffering to the people of Somalia, a disastrous civil war fomented by unpatriotic warlords, resulting in the destruction of all State institutions, the death of hundreds of thousands of Somalis and the displacement of millions. Despite the good intentions of the United Nations, Somalia suffered from the neglect of the international community, especially after 1993. The Somali conflict seemed intractable.

It was not until August 2000 that a Transitional National Government and a Transitional National Assembly were constituted and a head of State, His Excellency Mr. Abdikassim Salad Hassan, was elected. That was a result of a conference held in Arta, in the Republic of Djibouti, attended by more than 3,000 Somalis from all regions and all walks of life, including traditional leaders, intellectuals, business persons and women. The warlords were repeatedly invited and opted not to participate.

The Transitional National Government of Somalia has continued to engage in dialogue those who choose to be outside the Arta process, with a view to bringing them on board. We have been persistent in encouraging them to renounce war as a means of achieving political gains, and we share our vision of peace and national reconciliation in Somalia and for the Somali people.

In our endeavours to achieve peace and stability in Somalia, we have also engaged our brothers elsewhere in the subregion, regional organizations and the United Nations, to assist us in the search for durable peace in Somalia.

I am happy to note that the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), with the strong support of the international community, has undertaken a serious peace initiative for Somalia. IGAD has mandated the three frontline States of Kenya, Djibouti

and Ethiopia, under the chairmanship of His Excellency President Daniel arap Moi of Kenya, to work out the modalities and time frames for completing the Arta peace process. This has the support of the current Chairman of IGAD, His Excellency Mr. Omer Al-Bashir, President of the Republic of Sudan, and the heads of State of other IGAD countries. The IGAD process for the completion of the Arta process has streamlined the various and often conflicting initiatives for the first time.

IGAD has announced that a conference for the completion of the reconciliation process will be held in Kenya on 15 October 2002. The Transitional National Government will participate. We will participate with an open mind and with the interest of the Somali people as our foremost priority. The Transitional National Government will spare no effort to make the national reconciliation conference a success. We are gratified that the international community has recognized that the Arta peace process continues to be the most viable basis for peace and national reconciliation in Somalia. It is our hope that those regional administrations and other parties that have been outside the Arta process will share our vision for peace and stability in Somalia.

In this regard, it is of critical importance that the international community send a clear message to all the Somali participants to support the IGAD-sponsored conference in Kenya, making clear that those who try to sabotage it or refuse to participate will be sanctioned by the international community.

Equally important is the issue of guarantees for the outcome of the reconciliation conference. We believe and request that the international community should put in place regional and international measures guaranteeing both the finality and the legality of the outcome of the conference in Kenya. The international and regional guarantees must ensure that sanctions will be imposed on any Somali group that rejects the outcome of the reconciliation conference in Kenya.

When the Somali parties agree on a peace framework during the October conference in Kenya, there will be an urgent need for international peacekeepers. There will also be an urgent need for disarmament and for the rebuilding of national institutions in Somalia. We urge the United Nations to be ready for this and to plan to meet the new challenges of disarmament, the demobilization of militias and reconstruction.

The wind of peace that is blowing across the African continent has finally reached Somalia. As the Transitional National Government, we are committed to the re-emergence of a new Somalia that is at peace with itself, its neighbours and the world. As a law-abiding State, we pledge to respect our obligations under the United Nations Charter and the Constitutive Act of the African Union and to remain a partner for peace and development in our continent and throughout the world.

The President: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Somalia for his respect for the agreed time limit.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jan Kohout, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic.

Mr. Kohout (Czech Republic): Let me start by saying how pleased I am to see a representative of my own country presiding over this session of the General Assembly. It is the first time that the Czech Republic has had the honour of chairing this supreme body of the United Nations. I am grateful to all who made this possible by supporting our aspirations. I wish you, Mr. President, every success in the performance of this important function, a function which was raised to such a high standard by your predecessor, Han Seung-soo of the Republic of Korea.

Representing the Government which assumed its function this July, I would like to confirm the continuity of Czech foreign policy, with its emphasis on the Euro-Atlantic dimension but also with a truly global reach and a strong involvement in multilateral cooperation. I should also mention that the Government of the Czech Republic has made its active participation in the fight against terrorism and against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction one of its top priorities.

A year ago at this time, the whole world was shocked by the horrific terrorist attacks on the United States of America on 11 September. The appalling dimensions of those attacks revealed the nature of the new threats that the international community is currently facing. Our response must be firm. We must move from the policy of containment to the policy of active struggle against international terrorism. At the

same time, we need to discuss issues that may be the source of, or a fertile ground for, violent acts of a similar nature.

This November, Prague will host the summit of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council. The Czech Republic will support NATO's enlargement to include additional countries from Central and Eastern Europe. At the same time, we are aware of the importance of NATO and European Union relations with the Russian Federation, Ukraine and the Mediterranean countries. We also anticipate that the Prague summit will mark an important milestone in the history of the alliance in connection with its transformation to meet such current security challenges as international terrorism and other asymmetric threats. We are convinced that these steps will contribute to strengthening the stability and security of the world as a whole.

The Czech Republic is paying great attention to the problem of Iraq. We advocate the unconditional implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions, including those concerning the renewal of arms inspections, disarmament, the release of detained Kuwaiti citizens and the return of confiscated Kuwaiti property. The current regime in Iraq, because of its efforts to develop and produce weapons of mass destruction and its failure to comply with the will of the international community, represents an enormous risk not only for the security and stability of the Middle East region, but for the international community as a whole. I can assure the Assembly that the Czech Republic supports the peaceful resolution of disputes in international relations.

However, our nation has its tragic experience with never-ending concessions to aggressive regimes. We must not forget that peace must sometimes be defended by force. The Czech Republic considers the letter by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq to the Secretary-General as a reaction to the firm stand of, and the pressure by, the international community. This pressure on the Iraqi regime must continue until all Security Council requirements are met in full.

The Czech Republic is also closely following the developments in the Middle East. Let me recall that our preference in this regard has always been for a peaceful and just settlement of the problem in line with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1403 (2002). The only meaningful option is to continue negotiations with the objective of stabilizing the current situation as a step towards achieving complete and lasting peace in this region. The Czech Republic shares the vision of peaceful co-existence between Israel and an independent and democratic Palestinian State, based on mutual trust and arrangements covering all security concerns. In this regard, we welcome the promising results of the Quartet meeting held earlier this week.

With regard to peace and security, we recently witnessed some encouraging progress in the resolution of armed conflicts in Africa, namely, in Angola, Sierra Leone, Liberia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as in other areas, including the Balkans and Afghanistan. We welcome and support the positive changes. For example, the Czech Republic is devoting long-term attention to relations with the States of South-Eastern Europe and to the stabilization efforts of the international community in the western Balkans. This year, the Czech Republic became a participant in the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, which we regard as an important instrument for the economic renewal and reconstruction of the region.

As for Afghanistan, we consider peace, stability and democratization a key factor, both for the further peaceful development of the entire region, as well as for the wider international context of the fight against terrorism. The international community has to increase its efforts to stabilize the security situation and support the economic renewal of Afghanistan, including the breaking of its economy's dependence on the cultivation of opium.

Important components of the United Nations agenda include the areas of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The Czech Republic supports the process of the gradual reduction and destruction of nuclear arms within the framework of the ongoing process of the implementation and achievement of the universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the coming into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Similarly, the Czech Republic is working to achieve both the universality and rigorous implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, including the destruction of existing arsenals, and the strengthening of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. We also wish to see a renewal in the activities of the Conference on Disarmament and the commencement of

substantive talks on a fissile materials cut-off treaty. We invite member States of the Conference to take a decision concerning the enlargement of its membership.

The Czech Republic supports steps to strengthen the authority and effectiveness of the United Nations. This includes the reform and enlargement of the Security Council, the revitalization of the General Assembly, adapting peacekeeping operations in line with the Brahimi report, efforts to transform the culture of reaction to a culture of prevention and making changes in the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies, among other things, as a response to the challenges posed by goals of the Millennium Declaration and recent major United Nations conferences.

One of the major challenges currently facing the international community is to ensure that all countries have fair access to the benefits of globalization. Issues such as development assistance and cooperation, debt relief for highly indebted developing countries and non-discriminatory participation in a multilateral trade system, together with what we call good governance, are key both for further economic progress in many parts of the world and for preserving favourable living conditions for future generations.

In that context, the Czech Republic welcomes the successful conclusion of the Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development, held earlier this year, and of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg just a few weeks ago. The Summit reinforced the determination of the international community to pursue the goal of sustainable development and, most importantly, stressed implementation, time-bound goals and specific commitments, responsibility and accountability. Let us now make sure that the core message of Johannesburg is not forgotten. Let us hope that the Summit is followed by concrete actions at the global, regional, national and local levels, including through initiatives such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

The Czech Republic attaches great significance to the strengthening of international law and respect for human rights. We are determined to seek an early conclusion of a general United Nations convention on international terrorism. We also welcome the establishment of the International Criminal Court. I believe that the Czech Republic will join the large group of parties to the Rome Statute in the near future.

The Czech Republic is conscious of the contribution of the United Nations to promoting respect for, and protection of, human rights. We call for a consistent approach to fulfilling the obligations entered into, in particular in relation to the advancement of women and the protection of the rights of the child, including in situations of armed conflict. We advocate the prevention and gradual elimination of all forms of racism and discrimination, including that against members of ethnic or religious minorities, persons with disabilities and older persons and a ban on torture and the death penalty. We are paying very close attention to the draft optional protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The Czech Republic will actively promote the adoption of the draft protocol by this session of the General Assembly.

This session of the General Assembly will be remembered, inter alia, for the admission of two new members, Switzerland and East Timor. I welcome Switzerland most cordially to the United Nations family, and I look forward to welcoming East Timor. Their entry into the Organization represents a further step towards completing the universality of the membership of the United Nations, the achievement of which the Czech Republic unanimously supports and which represents further proof of the vitality of our Organization.

I could stop here. But before I finish, allow me to take advantage of this occasion to raise two issues. First, I would like to reaffirm the continued interest of the Czech Republic in supporting the activities of the United Nations Information Centre in Prague, which last year was housed in new premises — the so-called Prague United Nations House — also seating representative bodies of other organizations of the United Nations system. And finally, on behalf of the people of the Czech Republic, I wish to warmly thank all who generously provided humanitarian and other types of assistance to my country after it had been struck by devastating floods last August. At that critical time, we saw an enormous wave of international solidarity, and the floods thus contributed to a coming together among ourselves, our neighbours and the rest of the world.

The President: I thank the representative of the Czech Republic for his statement and for adhering to the agreed time limit.

The Assembly will now hear an address by Her Excellency Mrs. Irma Loemban Tobing-Klein, Chairperson of the delegation of Suriname.

Mrs. Loemban Tobing-Klein (Suriname): The creation on 24 October 1945 of the family of nations brought the peoples of the world values, principles and goals to cherish and to realize. The founders of the United Nations brought us hope; they brought us new belief in the future of humanity after two world wars. They opened the eyes of the world community to such key issues as human dignity, equality, tolerance, peace, national and international security, social and economic progress, and respect for human rights.

How do we deal with those precious gifts? Do we, the Member countries — large and small; powerful and less powerful; developed, less developed and developing — make the optimal use of those tools to shoulder the necessary responsibility and solidarity with one another and with our peoples, in particular the most vulnerable ones among us: our children, older persons, persons with disabilities, persons with HIV/AIDS, women and men, and older and younger persons who are suffering from extreme poverty, hunger, deadly diseases, drought and war crimes?

In my statement today on behalf of the Government and the people of the Republic of Suriname, in which those fundamental issues should be addressed, I would first like to express feelings of peace and love to the entire United Nations family: peace and love, which was brought to us in the peace messages of the President and of the Secretary-General and in the beautiful songs of the United Nations Choir during the Peace Bell Ceremony, held this morning here at Headquarters, on the occasion of the International Day of Peace; peace and love to you, Mr. President, because of your unanimous election to that high Office, because of your readiness to serve and because of your country's important contribution to the lofty goals of the Organization; peace and love to your predecessor, Mr. Han Seung-soo, for his energetic guidance and leadership during the remarkable fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly; and peace and love to the dedicated and inspiring Secretary-General and to the entire Secretariat — those who work actively every day everywhere in the United Nations system and who, despite their difficult roles, which include security personnel, interpreters, conference officers, field workers, information and communication technology personnel and personnel in the various agencies and programmes, always stand ready to serve humanity with a kind smile.

Mr. Laotegguelnodji (Chad), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Peace and love were enshrined in the recent 11 September message of President Runaldo Ronald Venetiaan of the Republic of Suriname to President George W. Bush of the United States of America:

> "On this day, our thoughts and feelings are with the families and friends of the victims of the cruel terrorist attack on 11 September 2001, as well as with the Government and people of the United States of America. The people of Suriname pray that the whole of the American nation will prosper in peace, together with all of the global family".

We express peace, love and special words of welcome to the newly admitted Swiss Confederation, which, as of 10 September 2002, has joined our family as the 190th Member State, after having served the United Nations so well as an observer State, especially with respect to the promotion of human rights and the protection of humanitarian law. We also express our special feelings of love, peace and welcome to the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, which will be admitted as the 191st Member State of the United Nations on 27 September 2002 after a long process of preparation, on the basis of Security Council resolution 1272 (1999), with the strong participation of its own well-motivated people and with the guidance and support of the international community. We wish the Governments and peoples of both countries well in their future endeavours.

Last year, designated as the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, came at a time in today's world when dialogue proved to be most essential. Suriname is a fervent advocate of dialogue. Therefore, we prefer to choose the path of dialogue to solve our disputes. I am pleased to say that the Surinamese peoples, who originated in all parts of the world — in Africa, Asia, the Americas and Europe — live in peace and harmony with one another. We also cherish our peaceful and friendly relations with neighbouring countries and with many other countries

around the globe. To promote unity in our society, the ideals of peace and respect for one another's cultures are incorporated into our national educational programmes and are taught from an early age.

The human rights based approach to development, including the notion that human rights education is a key to development, should be embraced. Therefore, the national education plan of Suriname will also deal with human rights education. Awareness should be raised that poverty among our peoples is a serious violation of their human rights: every human being has the right to an adequate standard of living with regard to health, medical care and well-being — the right to education, to food, to housing and to social services in general.

Suriname has ratified all major human rights instruments. We welcomed the special attention of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women during the consideration of, among other things, Suriname's initial periodic report, submitted last June, on the importance of human rights as a way to transform society and as a birthright. My delegation emphasizes that no equality can be achieved unless human rights become a way of life.

Therefore, on behalf of my Government, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the former High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mrs. Mary Robinson, for the excellent manner in which she carried out her duties. At the same time, we wish to welcome the newly appointed High Commissioner for Human Rights, who is from our region: Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello of Brazil.

We extend our best wishes to him, and are convinced that he will guide us in promoting and protecting the effective enjoyment by everyone of all civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights, including the right to development, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 48/141.

If we indeed want the United Nations to maintain international peace and security, we need to abide by and implement the various resolutions and decisions it has adopted towards this goal. The commitments, declarations and action plans drafted at the various United Nations follow-up conferences held this year will have to be implemented. The difference in positions of various countries poses a threat to international peace and security, especially with regard to the consequences of trade liberalization for developing countries.

Achieving the Millennium Development Goals must be our first priority, and this achievement should not be jeopardized by an increase in defence expenditures.

We welcome Iraq's recently announced decision to allow the return of United Nations weapon inspectors into the country; we also applaud the recently agreed peace plan that aims to achieve, by 2005, a final settlement towards a peaceful solution to the conflicts in the Middle East.

If we want to guarantee international peace and security, we have to live up to the challenge of creating a world fit for children; a world without child-soldiers; a society for all ages, where people are no longer starving, dying of famine, drought or living in extreme poverty; where there is respect for human rights, the rule of law and international law; where there is fair trade, sustainable development, good governance; and where each individual has the right to development, the ultimate goal being to improve the quality of life of every human being — children, women, men, older persons and persons with disabilities.

According to the 2002 Human Development Report, many countries are poorer than they were 10, 20, and in some cases, even 30 years ago; genuine attention should be given to these most vulnerable people. Developing countries can by no means meet the needs of their people on the basis of their own financial resources; Governments of the developed world, international financial institutions and donor countries should increase their official development assistance.

Poverty eradication should be a high priority in our countries. Our poverty eradication programme is designed in such a way that it emphasizes not only labour demanding growth, but also, and especially, domestic capital demanding growth. Our Government has confidence in a programme focusing on technology and the education of our people to elevate our population to higher material and spiritual levels.

Education is an important vehicle leading to the awareness of health problems, such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, human rights and democracy issues, criminality, including cross-boundary crime, and drug trafficking. Suriname has a long tradition and

history regarding the involvement of civil society and other non-State actors in the development of our country and attaches great importance to real partnership between Government, civil society and non-governmental organizations in the fields of social affairs, education and health, among others.

During our participation last Monday in the high-level General Assembly session on the New Partnership for Africa's Development, we expressed the solidarity of the Government and People of Suriname with our brothers and sisters on the African continent and our strong support for Africa's determination to emerge from poverty, hunger and famine, and such destructive deadly diseases as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, in order to build a strong and lasting culture of peace and democracy based on Africa's precious natural and human resources and its cultural wealth.

Information and communication technologies (ICT) must be considered as essential for the sustainable development of peoples and societies; the rights-based approach to development should include the right to information and communication technologies. ICT has been recognized as an effective instrument in the fields of economic growth, knowledge, education at all levels, poverty eradication, people's empowerment, capacity-building, decision-making and the promotion of sustainable development.

The United Nations Secretary-General should be commended for the timely initiative within the United Nations system to create the United Nations Information and Communication Technologies Task Force, which plays a vital role in the preparatory process for the World Summit on the Information Society in December 2003 in Geneva and 2005 in Tunis. Various ICT programmes and projects for children, students, older persons and others, are being carried out in Suriname by the Government, the university and civil society.

My country will continue to support the work of the United Nations. We are committed to implementing the plans of action of the important follow-up United Nations Conferences held this year — namely, the Special Session on Children, the International Conference on Financing for Development, the World Assembly on Ageing, the World Food Summit and the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

The challenges that we face with regard to economic, social and environmental development are to cut poverty in half within the next 10 years. My Government is committed to working on the economic growth and poverty eradication of our own people. We are also faced with the challenge of improving environmentally-friendly and healthy products and consumer goods; protecting and managing the natural resource base of Suriname; improving the sustainable development of small island developing States; and strengthening the management of sustainable development at the national, regional and international levels.

Because Suriname is situated in the Caribbean region, the region with the second highest rate of HIV/AIDS-infected people in the world, this issue is of utmost importance. Besides HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis pose grave threats not only to health in general, but also to the labour sector and to the social and economic development of Suriname. We are, therefore, now taking the necessary steps to submit a request for funding through the United Nations Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

We are faced with a vast amount of issues that need to be solved, and agreements and programmes that need to be implemented in order to improve the lives of our peoples. The United Nations still proves to be the best place to collectively discuss the problems of the world and to look for lasting solutions. It is up to us to live up to our commitments as Members of the United Nations and to create better living conditions for our people. We can only hope that this would eventually lead to stability in and between our countries, and ultimately lead to peace and security, as envisioned by the founders of this great Organization.

Secretary-General Annan and Assembly President Kavan, at this morning's Peace Bell ceremony, exhorted the international community to heed the message of International Peace Day and let it resound far and wide, spreading dignity, justice, understanding, solidarity and prosperity.

Let there be peace on earth. Let peace begin with all of us who are assembled in this beautiful, historical General Assembly Hall. May the Almighty be with all of us.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Alfred Capelle, Chairman of the delegation of the Marshall Islands.

Mr. Capelle (Marshall Islands): I bring to the Assembly warm greetings from President Kessai H. Note.

On behalf of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, I am honoured to congratulate Mr. Jan Kavan on his election to this high office. Let me also take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for the hard work that he and the Secretariat have undertaken in preparation for this General Assembly.

I am also very pleased to extend a warm welcome and congratulations from the Marshall Islands to the people of Switzerland and of East Timor, as the newest Members of the United Nations.

It is unfortunate that this, the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, is meeting in the shadow of the anniversary of the terrorist attacks that shocked our host country — and the world — on 11 September 2001. Modern terrorism is an issue of concern for all peoples, regardless of nationality or religion. It is an issue that no nation can afford to ignore.

While sharing in the feelings of terror, horror and sorrow caused by the terrorist attacks in the United States, the people of the Marshall Islands are hopeful that the Member States of the United Nations will continue to join together in working towards global peace and security. I urge this body, which collectively represents the moral force of all Member States, to do everything in its power to eliminate the threat of terrorism.

I am pleased to announce that the Marshall Islands has recently completed a process of national priority-setting and of assessing Government policy. We have thoroughly reviewed the state of our nation through the holding of a National Economic and Social Summit, whose findings have formed the basis for our long-term sustainable development plan, entitled "Republic of the Marshall Islands Vision 2018".

This process of review was guided by consultations with all stakeholders and all sectors of our society. Extensive discussions and interviews were carried out in order to ensure that all members of the Marshall Islands community would have the opportunity to contribute to our vision for the future.

The Marshall Islands Government has determined that all development policies and objectives will be guided by the vision generated by the Summit, and we are now in the process of implementing the core ideals of this blueprint for sustainable development.

In developing our national vision, the Marshall Islands Government has also responded to the international agenda as set by the United Nations. We have ensured that our policies will reflect the all-important priorities of good governance, respect for fundamental human rights, protection of the environment, and conservation of natural resources. We have also taken account of social development objectives and of the need to invest in the areas of health and education. We are confident that, by linking our national priorities to the international agenda, the correct policy decisions will be made.

During the 1990s the Marshall Islands went through a period of structural adjustment and reform at the demand of the international donor community. We have faithfully carried out these costly and socially disruptive reforms, in the hope that some form of reward would be forthcoming. We now have in place a forward-looking and pragmatic set of policies, and we are eager to translate them into action for the betterment of the lives of our people. Yet there are few who are willing to assist us in achieving this goal.

I therefore stand here, at the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, to advocate for a new international paradigm: one that recognizes both the unique challenges facing small island developing States such as the Marshall Islands, as well as the unique resources and gifts that such nations possess — resources that can benefit the whole of the international community only through substantive and sustained partnerships.

It is time to reconceptualize the relationship that exists between more established and less-established nations, from one of donors and recipients to one of mutual beneficiaries and collaborators. Only in this way will it be possible fully to realize the promise of true international cooperation and development.

The Marshall Islands has so much in the way of native intellectual, environmental and cultural resources to share with the international community. We look forward to creating new forms of partnership with entities around the world — partnerships that will redound to the benefit of the global community and of all its residents.

The partnerships that are most meaningful to us are ones of a practical nature. Our communities, and those of many other nations like the Marshall Islands, are seeking partnerships of action that offer pragmatic and practical solutions that are coordinated and targeted for maximum effect.

The Marshall Islands shares challenges that are uniquely peculiar to many small island States: a precariously fragile environment that is highly sensitive to the threat posed by global warming; a narrow economic base that imposes constraints on the potential for progressive and sustainable development; and an institutional milieu that is slowly developing the capability of harnessing the benefits of science and technology.

In relation to our international partners, the Marshall Islands is particularly concerned about the following issues. First of all, we are concerned about the environment. The Marshall Islands Government recognizes the need for a coordinated and comprehensive approach in seeking appropriate solutions to the challenges posed by environmental degradation and pollution.

We commend the Barbados Programme of Action, which, in conjunction with the outcome forged at the Johannesburg Earth Summit, will provide a guiding framework for sustainable development for small island States, such as the Marshall Islands. The wide divergence of views expressed in Johannesburg posed many challenges, but also produced rich insights into areas where our common strengths lie, and into how these might best be utilized.

Further, it is vital that the international community recognize the great challenge to life and culture that is posed by global climate change. This threat to life and culture is felt most acutely by nations such as the Marshall Islands — nations that face the very real threat of complete obliteration if our oceans rise by even marginal levels.

On behalf of the Marshall Islands, I commend those States that share our concerns and have signed and ratified the Kyoto Protocol. May I also urge the remaining non-signatory States to consider the vital importance and urgency of this issue. If the international community does not act now, the future will see the disappearance of many small island nations, which in turn will have immeasurable economic, environmental and immigration consequences for the entire global community.

Secondly, an issue that is particularly relevant to the Marshall Islands is that of nuclear cleanup and non-proliferation. The Marshall Islands seeks partnerships with members of the international community that will help raise to new levels the dialogue about nuclear weapons and their testing.

The people of the Marshall Islands have suffered greatly at the hands of a world that is continually preparing for war. We are restrained by the persisting legacy of toxic nuclear waste, which poses challenges far beyond our financial and scientific capability to solve. Our food chain continues to be affected, and our development is thwarted by our inability to use damaged lands.

I am pleased to state that the United States Congress is currently reviewing our situation, and we are hopeful that the outcome will contribute towards amelioration of this problem. Nevertheless, we believe that our hard-learned lessons can help to inform and instruct the international community in future debates about the use and testing of nuclear weapons.

And thirdly, another issue that is particularly pertinent for our people is that of oceans and fisheries. As a nation whose entire livelihood depends on the resources of the sea, the Marshall Islands Government pledges its unwavering support for the Law of the Sea management regime. In particular, we emphasize the importance of Article 63 (1) of the Convention, which speaks of the need for States to agree on measures necessary to coordinate and ensure the conservation and development of shared stocks.

The Marshall Islands is also pursuing the establishment of national fisheries industries that will gradually enable the replacement of foreign fishing fleets; the delineation of our own exclusive economic zone; and the establishment of international guidelines to protect our oceans for generations of future fishermen and the people who count on the work they do for survival.

I have mentioned only a few of the priorities that my delegation will be seeking to raise at the appropriate moment in the upcoming committee debates and in our interactions with United Nations agencies and our development partners. There are, of course, many other issues of concern to both the

Marshall Islands and the international community as a whole — issues with which all of us will wrestle in the coming years.

Among the most important challenges faced by this body is the continued exclusion of the Republic of China on Taiwan from the United Nations. The Marshall Islands Government reiterates its concern that the exclusion of a nation of peaceful and law-abiding citizens is not consistent with the inclusive ideal of the United Nations. I therefore urge each and every one of you, all of us, to overcome our biases and to allow the admission of the Republic of China on Taiwan to the United Nations.

Another important challenge faced by this body is the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. The Marshall Islands considers that urgent diplomatic action is required in order to work towards a peaceful solution to this threat to international peace and security.

The Marshall Islands wishes to emphasize its support for the expansion of the United Nations Security Council. We believe that there should be an increase in the number of both permanent and non-permanent members of the Council and that such expansion should include members from both developed and developing countries. This would significantly broaden the representation base of the Council and thus reinforce its ongoing validity.

May I take this opportunity to congratulate the international community on its support for the newly-established International Criminal Court. The Marshall Islands is hopeful and confident that the Court will prove to be a powerful mechanism in the administration of justice at the international level. We are, however, currently considering the making of a bilateral agreement under Article 98 of the Rome Statute and will determine this issue after a careful assessment of the implications of such an agreement.

The President took the Chair.

Finally, I wish to reaffirm the strong commitment in fellowship and solidarity of the Marshall Islands with all the Member States of this body.

Long live the United Nations. God bless the United Nations.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Martin Belinga-Eboutou, chairman of the delegation of Cameroon.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): The delegation of Cameroon welcomes the unanimous vote that conferred upon the Czech Republic the presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session. Current circumstances may not be conducive to optimism, but the peoples of the United Nations are continuing to make progress towards the future. The heads of State or Government of the countries of the world mapped out the contours of that future during the Millennium Summit. They called for a future world in which humankind can live free from all fears and free from want. I am convinced that, given your excellent qualities, Mr. President, you, like your predecessor, will contribute to strengthening cohesion and peace among all States and peoples.

Cameroon welcomes the new additions to our family. Switzerland, our friend, has taken up the United Nations banner, and the young Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste will soon be joining it.

I should also like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, who, through his tireless efforts and commitment, is consolidating, day by day, the credibility and vitality of the United Nations in the eyes of its Member States and, more broadly, in international public opinion.

The United Nations, as never before, is a place for coordination, research, action and vigilance in favour of international peace and security. Our steadfast and determined commitment against terrorism in the aftermath of the tragic events of 11 September 2001 is proof of this.

Cameroon has acceded to the conventional instruments adopted by the United Nations immediately after that tragedy. We also associate ourselves fully with the resolutions that are now enabling the gradual emergence of a new Afghanistan — one of liberty and modernity for its people.

The fight against the destructive, indiscriminate and persistent evil of terrorism must be viewed in the long term in each of our countries and be based on decisions agreed to at the international level. That is why Cameroon fully supports the convening of a high-level conference to develop a joint response by the international community to terrorism.

Such a fight must not be merely a knee-jerk response. It will also require the adoption of a comprehensive approach that takes into account all the

factors of imbalance and injustice that can lead to such criminal activity.

It is for that reason that President Paul Biya appealed to the community of nations

> "to calm the international situation by doing away with injustice, which can provide a fertile ground for intolerance. Such a realistic step will enable us to eradicate the causes of dissatisfaction and revolt that, if unresolved, can lead to despair and, at worst, to terrorism".

In the same spirit, we believe that our common offensive on terrorism must rest on legal measures agreed to by all States, as well as on the effective implementation of commitments undertaken in the Millennium Declaration. We should recall that such commitments are aimed at providing further solidarity among nations and at reducing the gap between rich and poor countries. Firmness without justice can only promote feelings of frustration and will leave the problem unresolved.

Since becoming a member of the Security Council, the pre-eminent body of our Organization, on 1 January, Cameroon has made every effort to give credence to the doctrine of a twin-track approach to peace and security. Combating international terrorism will require the sincere and effective participation of all States Members of the United Nations. This in turn will require an environment of peace, stability and security among Member States. As a result, we must, whatever the cost, find a solution to the conflicts and tensions that, in Africa, the Middle East and Asia, continue to drive fault lines through international relations, among countries in the same region and even within certain States.

As with the fight against international terrorism, the mobilization of the international community against crises and armed conflicts must involve both resolute action and openness. Cameroon is especially concerned about the delicate question of sanctions, which are affecting several countries. Sanctions must be targeted so as to spare innocent civilians, while the concerns of third States, which can be indirect victims, must also be taken into account.

We believe the Security Council would benefit if sanctions were viewed more favourably. This could be achieved by according them further legitimacy, which would enable them to have the credibility essential to their effectiveness.

As for the institutional reform of the United Nations, which Cameroon, like many other countries, has been urging, special mention must be made of the inevitable expansion of Security Council membership. Such reforms of the principal decision-making body of the United Nations would permit a more integrated approach with regard to serious regional questions and the multilateral challenges that flow from globalization.

Cameroon is convinced that an overwhelming majority of Member States are willing and able to carry out these reforms. That very ability and will have been demonstrated by the establishment of the International Criminal Court; the first session of the Assembly of States Parties to the Statute has just been held here.

We cannot overemphasize the need for solidarity to unify our nations. Support for the development of the countries of the South must remain a priority, as must synergy among our States in order to define a vigorous policy for environmental protection. We have never had so many summits on these major challenges. Yet it must be noted that we have seldom adequately met the tremendous expectations of millions of women and children, the great majority of whom continue to live in precarious circumstances and with great fear for the future of the Earth.

We must ponder our failures. We must react with a surge of voluntarism that will enable us to launch a determined attack on such great pandemics as HIV/AIDS. That is the path charted by the first ladies of Africa, who, upon the invitation of Mrs. Chantal Biya, will meet in Yaoundé on 15 and 16 November to establish and launch, with the help of renowned researchers and scientists, a non-governmental organization called Synergies africaines contre le Sida et les autres souffrances. At that launching, Professors Robert Gallo and Luc Montagnier will moderate a scientific symposium on AIDS.

In order to combat fanaticism, we must cultivate fidelity to humankind. Such fidelity must be ongoing. According to a wise African saying, "the past and the present become one in the single desire to preserve mankind". Today more than ever, it is our duty to affirm our fidelity to our peoples without ever forgetting the fundamental virtues on which the universal fabric of mankind's aspirations and dreams is

woven. I recall that we have the urgent duty to forge the future that was shaped by our heads of State at the Millennium Summit — a world in which mankind will finally be free of fear, of all fears, and in which mankind shall never want.

Let us build a dream together. Let us dream together of that future full of hope. We would remind those who scorn such dreams that, in the beginning, there was a dream. To them, we would reiterate George Bernard Shaw's words:

> "Some men see things as they are and say why? I dream things that never were and say 'Why not?'"

In the beginning, there was a dream.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the general debate.

The representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran has asked for the floor in the exercise of the right of reply. I give him the floor.

Mr. Hamzehei (Islamic Republic of Iran): This morning, the Foreign Minister of the United Arab Emirates raised some unexpected claims against the territorial integrity of my country. Since we have clearly and repeatedly put on record our position on this issue on previous occasions, I need not go into details.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is fully committed to its international obligations, especially those arising from the agreement of 1971. We firmly believe that misunderstandings over the interpretation or application of that agreement — if any — should be addressed with goodwill and through mutually agreed mechanisms in order to find a friendly solution.

Meanwhile, my Government has also welcomed the interaction and exchange of views between Iranian and United Arab Emirates officials on issues of interest and concern to both our countries. In this respect, we are pleased that mutual visits have taken place in recent months, in which the two parties could discuss bilateral and regional issues and take a number of positive to address them.

We believe that dialogue between our two Governments can play a determining role in removing any existing misunderstandings.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the United Arab Emirates in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Al-Habsi (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to express my regret at the statement just made by the representative of Iran on the three United Arab Emirates' islands of Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa. The United Arab Emirates strongly regrets the ongoing, flawed Iranian claims and approach, which run flagrantly counter to all facts and historical, demographic and legal instruments, which prove that these islands belong to the United Arab Emirates. We consider the Iranian presence in those islands since 1971 to be an illegal military occupation in violation of the United Nations Charter and the rules of international law. Consequently, we hope that the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran will reconsider its policy with respect to those occupied islands. We also hope that it will respond seriously to the peaceful, good initiatives undertaken by the leadership of the United Arab Emirates, our officials and our good offices, as demonstrated by the two most recent visits paid by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates to Iran to prove the good intentions of the United Arab Emirates, aimed at settling the dispute over the islands. We should settle the matter through bilateral and peaceful negotiations and constructive dialogue, which are conducive to finding a just and comprehensive solution to this issue in a manner that will restore those three islands to the United Arab Emirates. If that is achieved, it will enhance good-neighbourly relations between our two peoples and our two countries. It will also lead to further stability, security, peace and development in the region.

The President: Before closing this year's general debate, I would like to make a few concluding remarks.

At the outset, allow me to express my sincere appreciation for the kind words of support and assurances of cooperation that members have extended to me and the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly. We will do our utmost to fulfil their expectations.

The high level of participation at this year's debate underscored the importance of our gathering. Among the 188 speakers, we have heard 33 heads of State, 14 heads of Government, 14 deputy prime ministers and 110 foreign ministers. The important

statement of the Secretary-General, emphasizing the fundamental necessity and continuing relevance of multilateralism as the guiding principle of our Organization and world affairs, generated a sound basis for our deliberations.

Our debate over the past 10 days has been rich and colourful, touching upon crucial issues approached from different perspectives. Yet again, the annual debate of the General Assembly has proved to be a unique platform for an exchange of opinions that will guide our activities during the whole session.

The opening of the general debate followed the day of mourning in commemoration of the attacks of 11 September. Throughout the entire debate, we reminded ourselves of the need to uphold the unprecedented unity of the anti-terrorist coalition and to continue our common fight against international terrorism. I do not recall a statement that did not make the fight against terrorism and the importance of addressing related issues a top priority.

This year's debate has had a major impact on the state of international affairs, as clearly demonstrated by the development of the situation in Iraq. Time and concrete actions will show if the Iraqi offer is credible. I hope, however, that the call for both multilateralism and compliance with the United Nations resolutions, so eloquently expressed in this Assembly, will shape future policies towards Iraq.

The urgent need to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is ever more pressing and has represented a major concern for most speakers. The latest Quartet negotiations introduced a plan outlining a three-phase road map to achieve the shared vision of two States — Israel and Palestine — living side by side in peace and security. The recognition of security, political, economic, humanitarian and institutional dimensions is an integral part of the plan. There is no need to stress, of course, that support for the endeavours of the diplomatic Quartet and compliance by both parties are essential for further progress and that much more detailed work has still to be done.

At the time of last year's general debate, Afghanistan was a war-torn country with a leadership that oppressed its own citizens and harboured the most despicable terrorist organization in the world. The changes that Afghanistan has experienced since then are unprecedented. On the first day of our debate, a democratically elected President of a completely different country addressed this Assembly. Despite all the progress achieved to date, Afghanistan still faces major security challenges and is in dire need of continued humanitarian and development assistance. The international community and major donors have played and must continue to play a decisive role in the positive changes in Afghanistan.

I have listened very carefully to the statements of representatives concerning the economic development and prosperity of their countries and regions. The message was apparent and clear: There are no development and prosperity without peace and stability. We have to dedicate our time during the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly to further addressing and confronting the issues of poverty eradication, HIV/AIDS, equitable distribution of the benefits of globalization and preservation of the environment.

To address these issues, many speakers have stressed the need to concentrate our efforts on meeting the targets and time frames laid out in the millennium development goals. The time has come to translate the outcomes of Monterrey and Johannesburg into truly achievable policies and concrete actions.

Very special attention during this year's general debate was given to the issues of Africa's development and its future, including United Nations support for the emerging New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) initiative. I highly appreciate the conclusions of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on NEPAD and I believe that the question of Africa and its development will remain high on our agenda.

Throughout the debate, references have been made in support of the continuing process of reforming the United Nations. Many of you expect that the role and function of the General Assembly will be revitalized and rationalized and that discussions on ensuring more equitable representation in the Security Council will continue.

In conclusion, I would like to thank you all for your active participation, which made our debate fruitful and successful. I appreciate that many speakers, although not all, have kept, more or less, to the agreed time limit of 15 minutes. I am convinced that shorter and comprehensive statements have greater and more unequivocal impact than do long surveys of numerous national and international issues, and that they also

make our work much more efficient. I also greatly appreciate the support and assistance provided to our deliberations by the United Nations Secretariat. My gratitude also goes to the city of New York and our host country for their hospitality and security arrangements.

My brief remarks cannot cover all the diverse views, ideas and initiatives expressed during the debate. Your concerns will be addressed in the coming meetings of the plenary and main committees. Let me express my belief that our work will continue in a really constructive and productive manner.

May I now take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 9?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

Organization of work of the fifty-seventh regular session of the General Assembly, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

(a) First report of the General Committee (A/57/250)

(b) Request for the inclusion of an additional sub-item: note by the Secretary-General (A/57/231)

The President: The Assembly will consider the first report of the General Committee, which has been circulated in document A/57/250. I will refer to specific sections and paragraphs of the report which contain recommendations for consideration by the Assembly.

The General Committee in paragraph 2 of its report draws the attention of the General Assembly to the provisions reproduced in annexes V, VI, VII and VIII of its rules of procedure.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of those provisions?

It was so decided.

The President: We shall now examine section II of the report, which deals with the organization of the session. We turn to section B, on the rationalization of work.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the provisions in paragraph 12 and 13 concerning the Main Committees?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn to section II.C, on the opening and closing dates of the session. In paragraph 14, the General Committee recommends that the fifty-seventh session should close on Monday, 8 September 2003.

May I take it that the General Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 15, the General Committee recommends that the fifty-seventh session recess no later than Wednesday, 11 December 2002.

May I take it that the General Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 16, the General Committee makes a recommendation concerning the completion of the work of the Main Committees during the main part of the session.

May I take it that the Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: Paragraph 17 concerns the new date of observance of the International Day of Peace. May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of paragraph 17?

It was so decided.

The President: Next, we turn to section II.D concerning the schedule of meetings.

In paragraph 19, the General Committee recommends that, in order to avoid the late start of meetings, the General Assembly should waive the requirement of the presence of at least one third of the Members to declare a plenary meeting open and permit the debate to proceed and of at least one quarter of the members to declare a meeting of a Main Committee open and permit the debate to proceed. May I take it that the General Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In this connection, I should like to endorse strongly the practical suggestion made at previous sessions for delegation to designate someone to be present at the scheduled time. While some progress has been reported on this subject, there is still considerable room for improvement. I genuinely hope that all delegations will cooperate.

In paragraph 20, the General Committee recommends that delegations should be reminded of the utmost importance of punctuality. May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: The next section, II.E, deals with the general debate. May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of paragraph 21?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to section II.F, on the election of the President, the Vice-Presidents, the Chairmen of the Main Committees and other officers of the Main Committees. May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of paragraph 23?

It was so decided.

The President: We shall now turn to section II.G. We turn first to paragraph 24. May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the rules of procedure mentioned in paragraph 24?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to paragraph 25. May I take it that the Assembly takes note of the provisions concerning explanations of vote and right of reply contained in paragraph 25?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to paragraph 26. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to limit points of order to five minutes, as recommended in paragraph 26?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to paragraphs 27 and 28. May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of paragraphs 27 and 28, regarding length of statements?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to paragraph 29. May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of paragraph 29, regarding concluding statements?

It was so decided.

The President: Section II.H deals with records of meetings. May I take it that the Assembly approves the recommendations contained in paragraphs 31 to 33?

It is so decided.

The President: Section II.I concerns resolutions. May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the provisions contained in paragraphs 34 to 36?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to section II.J, concerning documentation. May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of paragraphs 37 to 45?

It was so decided.

The President: Section II.K refers to questions related to the programme budget. May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the provisions contained in paragraphs 46 to 51, dealing with programme budget and conference services implications of proposals?

It was so decided.

The President: Section II.L concerns observances and commemorative meetings, paragraphs 52 and 53. May I take it that the Assembly approves the recommendations contained in paragraphs 52 and 53, regarding the format, the length of statements and the time frame of observances and commemorative meetings?

It was so decided.

The President: I now invite the General Assembly to turn to section II.M, which refers to special conferences. May I take it that the Assembly takes note of paragraphs 54 and 55?

It is so decided.

The President: I now invite representatives to turn to section III of the report, entitled "Observations on the organization of the work of the General Assembly".

In paragraph 57, the General Committee recommends to the General Assembly that it should fix a date for the opening and duration of the general

debate. May I take it that the Assembly takes note of paragraph 57?

It is so decided.

The President: I think that, indeed, the General Assembly should give serious consideration to this matter in the context of our future discussions on the revitalization of the General Assembly.

In paragraph 58, the General Committee brings to the attention of the General Assembly an issue relating to the timing of observances and commemorative meetings held in the plenary. The General Assembly has just approved the recommendation of the General Committee, as contained in paragraph 53, that observances and commemorative meetings should take place, to the extent possible, immediately following the general debate. Yet, in recent years, the General Assembly took decisions resulting in observances and commemorative meetings being held towards the end of the main part of the regular session, at a time when the Assembly should be considering reports of the Main Committees and concluding all remaining work of the plenary before the December recess, thereby causing the postponement of the date of recess. May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of paragraph 58?

It was so decided.

The President: As members are aware, at the fifty-seventh session, the General Assembly will devote several plenary meetings towards the end of November and the early part of December to observances and commemorative meetings, at a time when the Assembly should be taking up reports of the Main Committees and winding down its work.

Furthermore, as pointed out in paragraph 15 of the report, this has also resulted in the postponement of the date of our December recess.

I therefore appeal to all members to take those matters into account when considering proposals concerning the timing of observances or commemorative meetings to be held in the plenary at future sessions.

In paragraphs 59 and 60, the General Committee brings to the attention of the General Assembly that sometimes more than 48 hours are required for the Secretary-General to review the programme budget implications of proposals before the General Assembly. In addition, for those proposals with programme budget implications, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee also need time to review the programme budget implications of a draft resolution before the Assembly can act upon it. May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of paragraphs 59 and 60?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 61, the General Committee brings to the attention of the General Assembly that on some occasions, draft resolutions had to be submitted well in advance of their consideration, in order to ensure that they would be circulated the day before their consideration, in accordance with rule 78 of the rules of procedure. May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of paragraph 61?

It is so decided.

The President: In paragraph 62, the attention of the General Assembly is drawn to the fact that it is therefore advisable for delegations to submit proposals sufficiently in advance, in order to avoid postponement of action on proposals. May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of paragraph 62?

It was decided.

The President: I would therefore appeal to members to do their utmost to ensure the timely submission of draft resolutions to the General Assembly and the Main Committees. We shall now turn to section IV of the report of the General Committee relating to the adoption of the agenda. This section starts at paragraph 63. I should like to stress that at this time we are not discussing the substance of any item.

We shall now turn to paragraph 71 of the report of the General Committee. With regard to paragraph 71, the General Committee decided to defer to a later date its consideration of the inclusion of item 52 of the draft agenda (Question of the Comorian island of Mayotte).

In paragraph 72, the General Committee recommends that the consideration of item 85 of the draft agenda (Question of the Malagasy islands of Glorieuses, Juan de Nova, Europa and Bassas da India) should be deferred to the fifty-eighth session and that the item should be included in the provisional agenda of that session.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

In paragraph 73, in connection with item 167 of the draft agenda (Observer status for the Asian Development Bank in the General Assembly), the General Committee recommends its inclusion in the agenda of the current session.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

In paragraph 74, in connection with item 168 of the draft agenda (Observer status for the International Centre for Migration Policy Development in the General Assembly), the General Committee recommends its inclusion in the agenda of the current session.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

In respect of paragraph 75, the General Committee decided not to recommend the inclusion of item 169 of the draft agenda.

I understand that the representative of Gambia wants to address the Assembly on that issue.

I call on the representative of Gambia.

Mr. Grey-Johnson (Gambia): I refer to the debate on the question of the Republic of China on Taiwan in the General Committee meeting of 11 September 2002. We regret that delegations were allowed only two minutes to speak on this agenda item during a period limited by events scheduled to take place later that evening and the following day.

Ordinarily, the General Committee debate takes place over a two-day period. It is the wish of my delegation to clarify for the record the fact that time constraints were the only reason for limiting speakers to two minutes, and that this in no way establishes a precedent for the conduct of future General Committee debates. This is the view of all the Member States that sponsored the letter on the question of the Republic of China on Taiwan.

The President: I thank the representative of Gambia. Let me just say that, as the representative of Gambia I am sure is well aware, the time limit of two minutes was decided by the General Committee, of which Gambia is a member. This decision was taken in view of the very high number of speakers inscribed, altogether eighty-seven, and the limited amount of time we had at our disposal. I would also like to emphasize that as the introducer of the request, the representative of Gambia was not limited in his statement. I intend to enforce decisions of Member States concerning time limits for statements, as I believe they will contribute to the efficiency of our work.

I call on the representative of Tuvalu.

Mr. Sopoaga (Tuvalu): We fully respect the decision of the General Committee and the recommendation that you have just conveyed to the General Assembly. I would, however, like to lend my strong support to the point of clarification that the representative of Gambia raised and also to register our understanding that the two-minutes ruling adopted at the General Committee in discussing this important issue is not going to be a precedent in the future. We fully aligned ourselves with the sponsors of the issue to include the question of the Republic of China on Taiwan on the agenda of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

We would like to appeal that the rights of Members to raise issues of importance to themselves should be recognized in the future.

The President: I thank the representative of Tuvalu for making that point. I now call on the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Khairat (Egypt): I apologize for taking the floor at this late stage. I will be very brief.

(*spoke in Arabic*)

My delegation approves the report presented by the Bureau for the organization of the work of the General Assembly. I would like to express the following in relation to our participation in the work of the Bureau. The delegation of Egypt was unable to participate in the discussions last week when the General Committee examined point 169 on the agenda relating to the representation of the Republic of China on Taiwan in the United Nations. Our absence from the discussion was due to our participation in the general debate of the General Assembly and in a number of ministerial meetings that were held at the same time as the general debate.

My delegation would like to affirm before paragraph 75 is adopted that the Republic of Egypt affirms and supports the fact that the Government of People's Republic of China is the only legitimate representative of the people of China.

The President: I thank the representative of Egypt for making that point. We now turn to the agenda which the General Committee recommends for adoption by the General Assembly.

In accordance with past practice, we shall follow the numbering given in paragraph 76 of the General Committee's report (document A/57/250) and, where it seems appropriate, we shall consider items in groups. I should like to remind members once again that at present we are not discussing the substance of any item.

Items 1 to 3 have already been dealt with.

We now turn to items 4 to 8. May I remind the delegations that we are dealing only with the question of the inclusion of the items.

I take it that these items are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Item 9 has been dealt with already.

We turn next to items 10 to 164, recommended for inclusion by the General Committee.

May I take it that these items are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: With regard to items 165 and 166, members will recall that the General Assembly has already decided to include these items in the agenda of the current session.

We now turn to section V of the report of the General Committee, on allocation of items.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the provisions contained in paragraphs 77 to 80?

It was so decided.

The President: We shall now turn to the recommendations contained in paragraphs 83 to 86. We shall take up the recommendations one by one.

Before we proceed, may I remind members that the item numbers refer to the agenda in paragraph 76 of the report before us, namely document A/57/250.

We turn first to the recommendation in paragraph 83 (a), relating to item 10, entitled "Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization".

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of paragraph 83 (a)?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to paragraph 83 (b), relating to item 12, entitled "Report of the Economic and Social Council".

May I take it that the General Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn next to the recommendation in paragraph 83 (c) relating to item 19, entitled "Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples".

May I take it that the General Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn to the recommendation in paragraph 83 (d), relating to item 22 (h), entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union".

May I take it that the General Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn next to paragraph 83 (e), relating to item 23, entitled "United Nations Year of Cultural Heritage".

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of paragraph 83 (e)?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn next to paragraph 83 (f), relating to item 25, entitled "Oceans and the law of the sea".

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of paragraph 83 (f)?

It was so decided.

The President: Next, we turn to the recommendation in paragraph 83 (g), concerning item 39, entitled "Question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)".

May I take it that the General Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn to paragraph 83 (h), concerning item 41, entitled "Final review and appraisal of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s".

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of paragraph 83 (h)?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn next to paragraph 83 (i), relating item 43, entitled "Follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children".

May I take it that the General Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In connection with paragraph 83 (j), relating to item 54, entitled "Question of Cyprus", the General Committee recommends that the General Assembly allocate the item at an appropriate time during the session.

May I take it that the General Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to the recommendation in paragraph 84, relating to item 66, entitled "General and complete disarmament".

May I take it that the General Assembly approves the recommendation pertaining to item 66?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn next to the recommendation in paragraph 85 (a), relating to item 98, entitled "Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family".

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of paragraph 85 (a)?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the recommendation in paragraph 85 (b), relating to item 102, entitled "Advancement of women".

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to approve this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the recommendation in paragraph 86 (a), relating to item 165, entitled "Observer status for the Asian Development Bank in the General Assembly".

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly that the item be allocated to the Sixth Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the recommendation in paragraph 86 (b), relating to item 166, entitled "Observer status for the International Centre for Migration Policy Development in the General Assembly".

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly that the item be allocated to the Sixth Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We shall now turn to paragraph 87 of the report of the General Committee. I invite members to turn to the list of items recommended by the General Committee for consideration in plenary meeting.

Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of the items listed in paragraph 87 of the report of the General Committee for consideration directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: We now come to the list of items that the General Committee has recommended for allocation to the First Committee.

Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of the items proposed for the First

Committee in paragraph 87 of the report of the General Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to the list of items that the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee, the Fourth Committee.

Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of items proposed for the Special Political and Decolonization Committee in paragraph 87 of the report of the General Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We now come to the list of items that the General Committee has recommended for allocation to the Second Committee.

Taking into account the decision just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of items proposed for the Second Committee in paragraph 87 of the report of the General Committee?

It is so decided.

The President: We turn now to the list of items that the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Third Committee.

Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of items to the Third Committee as proposed in paragraph 87 of the report of the General Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of items to the Fifth Committee, as proposed in paragraph 87 of the report of the General Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: Lastly, we come to the list of items which the General Committee recommends for the Sixth Committee.

Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of items proposed to the Sixth Committee in paragraph 87 of the report of the General Committee.

It was so decided.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of the first report of the General Committee.

The General Assembly will now take up a request submitted by the Secretary-General in document A/57/231.

As indicated in his note, the Secretary-General has received notification of the resignation of a member of the United Nations Staff Pension Committee.

The General Assembly, therefore, will be required at its current session to appoint a person to fill the remainder of the term of office of the person who resigned, and to that end the Secretary-General requests the inclusion in the agenda of a sub-item entitled "Appointment of a member of the United Nations Staff Pension Committee", under agenda item 17 (Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments).

Unless there is an objection, in view of the urgency of this request, I shall take it that the General Assembly agrees that the relevant provision of rule 40 of the rules of procedure, which would require a meeting of the General Committee on the question of the inclusion of this sub-item on the agenda, could be waived.

I see no objection.

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that the General Assembly, on the proposal of the Secretary-General, wishes to include in the agenda of the current session an additional sub-item entitled "Appointment of a member of the United Nations Staff Pension Committee," under item 17, entitled "Appointment to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments"?

It was so decided.

The President: The sub-item is therefore included as sub-item (j) of item 17.

It is suggested that the sub-item be allocated to the Fifth Committee.

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to allocate this sub-item to the Fifth Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded its work for today.

I wish to thank all members of the Assembly for their cooperation.

Each Main Committee will receive the list of agenda items allocated to it so that it may begin and organize its work in accordance with rule 99 of the rules of procedure.

The meeting rose at 7.15 p.m.